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HARPER'S
July 1982

OP OUT OF NATO AND BRING HOME THE TROOPS
INTELLECTUALS · BOWLING WITH DR. MENGELE

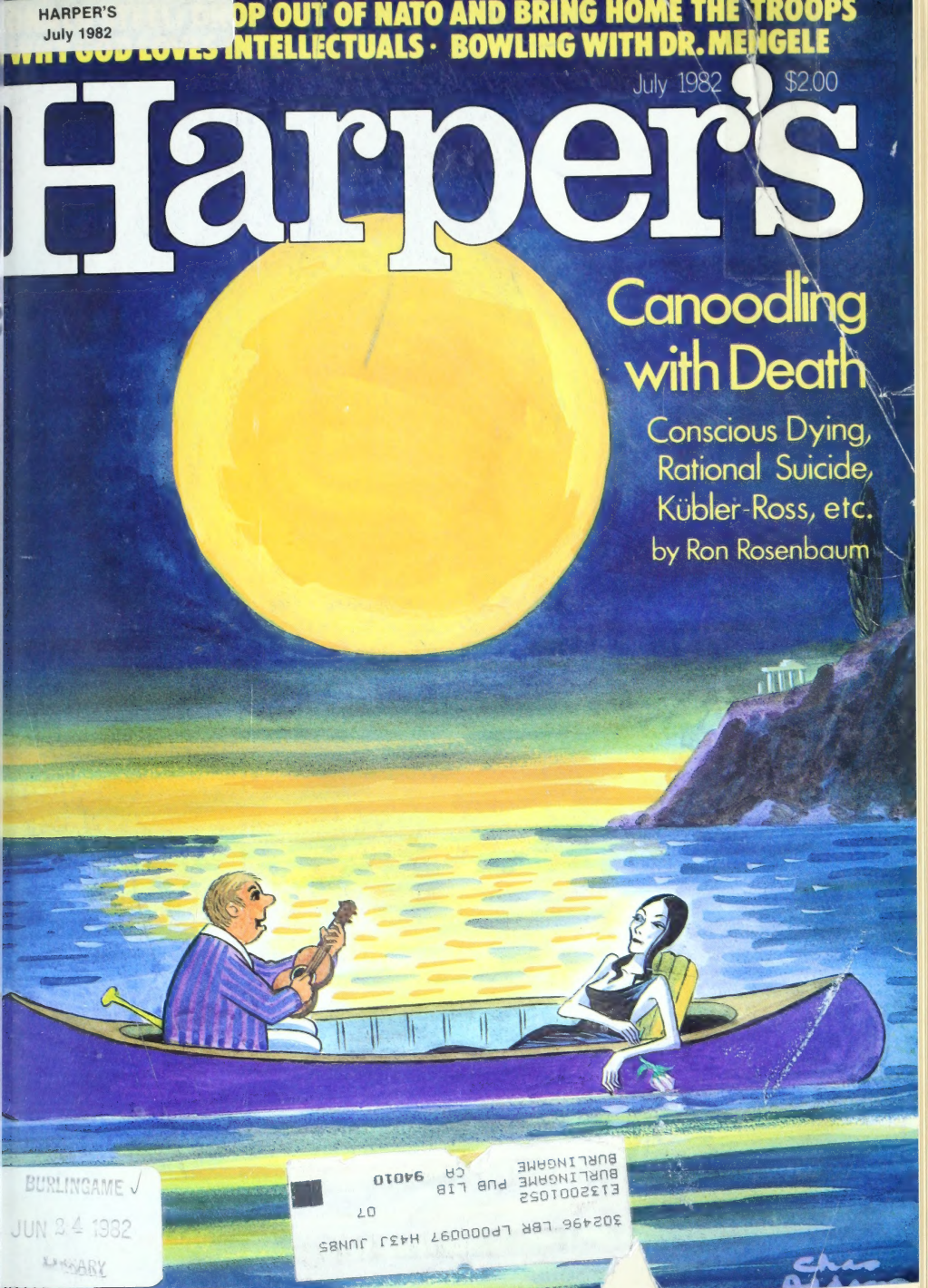
July 1982 $2.00

Harper's

Canoodling with Death

Conscious Dying, Rational Suicide, Kübler-Ross, etc.

by Ron Rosenbaum



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Women on the Bench

A woman named Esther Morris, a non-lawyer, became the first of her sex to join the judiciary in this country when the governor of the Territory of Wyoming appointed her a part-time justice of the peace in a place called South Pass Mining Camp. The year was 1870.

Fully half a century elapsed before a woman was elected, rather than appointed, to a judicial position other than justice of the peace. Up until the last decade, only a handful of women had ever served as judges.

No longer are women a token presence on the bench. They are now being elected or appointed to judgeships in increasing numbers. Albeit in a minority that's still disappointingly small, they are a significant and growing force in both the state and federal judiciaries. The most prominent, of course, is Sandra Day O'Connor, who joined the U.S. Supreme Court in 1981.

More and more women will move into judgeships in the years ahead as their ranks in the law expand. In 1910 only 1% of all the lawyers in this country were women. Some 60 years later, the proportion was still below 3%. But by 1980 about 13% — nearly 59,000 — of the lawyers in the U.S. were women. If current trends continue, one-third of our lawyers will be women by the year 2000. An ever-larger pool is being formed to draw on for female judges.

What kind of women don judicial robes? *Judicature,* the journal of the American Judicature Society, recently published a profile based on returns from questionnaires distributed to all 549 female lawyers who were sitting as state court judges in late 1980.

The typical woman jurist at the time was 48 years old, white, a Democrat of moderate to liberal bent, who had served on the bench for six years and had been a lawyer for 13. After attending a private law school, she practiced with a small law firm. Most likely she first became a judge by filling an unexpired term through a gubernatorial appointment on recommendation of a nominating commission. She went on to win additional tenure by popular election.

Debate in some legal and affirmative action circles revolves around the more effective means of selection — appointment or election — for placing more women on the bench. Many organizations representing women's interests prefer electoral over appointive selection. Yet most women judges themselves believe an appointive system not only results in more women judges, but also produces a higher-quality judiciary.

The last decade has brought marked progress in women's presence on the bench. In 1971 fewer than 200 women lawyers were judges in state courts. By 1980 the number had nearly tripled. That's in addition to the numerous women non-lawyers sitting as limited-jurisdiction judges.

Until the late '70s, only eight women had served as federal district or appeals judges in the nation's entire history. President Carter alone appointed 41. President Reagan then named the first woman to the Supreme Court.

It took generations of effort to break down male bastions in the courtroom. Finally, women are achieving rightful prominence and participation in America's judicature. They are adding dimension and texture to deliberations and decisions. Their role, their contributions, and their influence can be expected to grow in the years to come.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

Harper's

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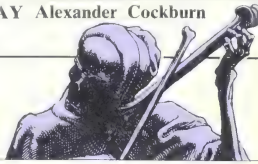
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* **canoodle** v. i.,v. t. **1.** *to make love, pet, caress, fondle, neck;* **2.** *to coax;* **3.** *to propel a canoe.*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are very welcome, especially if they are short and typed double-spaced. We enjoy hearing from readers, even though volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

LETTERS



Contra von Hoffman

Concerning the classification of von Hoffman's diatribe ["Contra Reaganum," *Harper's*, May], you are not properly using the word "philippic." The author is a lunatic and possibly under the influence of alcohol. That does not make him a Cicero.

B. DANIK
North Caldwell, N.J.

In his vitriolic article about Ronald Reagan, Nicholas von Hoffman says that Reagan's generation was "actually the luckiest generation in our history." I am a prosperous sixty-five-year-old "Anglo" college-educated professional, so I guess I qualify.

Von Hoffman's ignorance is appalling. My father was *not* too young to lose anything, so he lost a great deal of property and income in the crash. His friend Fred took an economic rocket ride from $700 a month as a salesman in 1929 to $70 a month as a clerk in a wine-and-beer shop in 1931.

I started working six hours a day after school when I was sixteen, getting one dollar a day. College seemed impossible when I got out of high school the next year, so I went to work full time in a twenty-four-hour food market. My father insisted I go to college. When September came I enrolled at UCLA, wondering where the money would come from. The answer turned out to be simple: nowhere. My father thought college came free, so I lived with two other hardy young guys in a tent on a hillside, or in a shabby room in Sawtelle that would now be condemned by the welfare authorities. We wore school sweatshirts, showered in the men's gym, and made do.

Upon graduating I got a corporate professional job at $130 a month. After three years of this largesse World War II came along, and our luckiest generation was yanked off the road to riches and thrown into uniform. I left my wife and baby boy for three exciting years on an aircraft carrier and on a grubby Pacific island with 10,000 others like me. My friend Henry died at Bataan; my brother-in-law was shot down in China, and spent three months dodging Japanese soldiers; my brother waded through the snow and mud of the Battle of the Bulge, and died at age thirty-five of war-related illness. Like many others after any war, I returned home rootless. I left my job, went to Oregon for a year to be independent and get rich farming, and went utterly broke in the process.

About then my life turned around, and in my early thirties things began to jell. Now I am about to turn sixty-five, and am in pretty good shape financially. I am mildly proud of it, and I see no reason why I shouldn't be. I do not agree with all of Ronald Reagan's acts and policies, but I suspect that a good bit of his behavior stems from the same sources as mine. He too has survived, and not because he was part of "the luckiest generation in history."

ROBERT H. PASCHALL
Sacramento, Calif.

In "Contra Reaganum," Nicholas von Hoffman expresses (feigns?) surprise at Reagan's attitudes and actions as president. Reagan's rac-

ism, his antipathy toward the poor, his bias toward industry rather than individuals, his intellectual vacuity—all of these, says von Hoffman, are characteristics that have become evident since Reagan's election.

Poppycock.

Anyone even remotely familiar with Reagan's years as governor of California knew who Reagan was; he has always spoken his beliefs, has never hidden his biases or his ignorance. I would have thought that a man of von Hoffman's political involvement would be familiar with Reagan and California. It is, after all, the nation's most populous state, and he was, after all, governor for eight years. His actions and his words were matters of public record.

Reagan the governor became Reagan the president without shifting gears. During those years as governor he rehearsed and honed his litany about lazy bums and welfare chiselers. He struck against freedom and excellence at the University of California, supported the war in Vietnam, and opposed organization by the farm workers.

ANONYMOUS
Torrance, Calif.

I wish to thank Nicholas von Hoffman for putting into words what I have felt both before and since Reagan became president.

I have never been able to look at the man or listen to the man without getting sick to my stomach; this includes movies, California politics, and television. What makes this even more ludicrous is that for thirty-seven years I have been a registered Republican and am now ashamed to admit it. So, you see, Mr. von Hoffman, I'm not such a bad gal after all. Mr. von Hoffman, I like you!

XANTA BRONDSTETTER
El Granada, Calif.

Schell shock

How odd that *Harper's* May issue should contain both a well-reasoned analysis of the balance of power in Europe ["Soviet Blitzkrieg: Who Wins?" by John Keegan] and also a piece of anti-antinuclear hysteria written as though the facts so admirably set out thirty-eight pages further on did not exist ["Nuclear Holocaust in Perspective"].

If you strip Michael Kinsley's piece of its nonessential verbiage, one of the main bits of flotsam left behind by the receding tide is the old claim that only by possessing the means to wipe out humanity does NATO prevent Warsaw Pact boots from muddying the streets of Paris. The only other piece of debris on Kinsley's morose shoreline worth picking over is the more generalized version of the same claim—namely, that nuclear weapons prevent war.

The answer to Kinsley's final plea "What *do* they want?" has been stated often enough, heaven knows—but let me attempt an exceedingly clear version of it for the benefit of the hard of hearing and hard of thinking.

The antinuclear movement believes that the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons is theoretical only, and that the Warsaw Pact's desire and ability to conquer Europe with conventional forces is a canard put up by people with a professional interest in NATO arms purchase.

The movement has no confidence in the superpowers' ability to limit a nuclear exchange. There is a chance of a global war that will wipe out humanity, which leads us to regard nuclear weapons as different in kind from the worst that prenuclear warfare could come up with.

Accordingly, the movement demands an end to the nuclear confrontation and does not in the least care who makes the first move. Only a very few advocate absurdities such as the overnight renunciation of the whole of the nuclear deterrent of one side.

STUART HARRIS
San Diego, Calif.

Michael Kinsley's article on the antinuclear-war movement raised some questions. I got the distinct impression that he is disturbed that so many people are reading Schell's book. This is hardly Schell's fault. Kinsley's criticism on that score would be better directed at Schell's readers, for being so stupid as to read a work that he finds so lacking.

Kinsley's arguments contain some unexamined assumptions of his own. For example, he implies that a thermonuclear exchange is the only reason that the Soviets do not invade western Europe. More interestingly, however, he contends that since Western governments possess democratic institutions, pressure exerted on them by the antinuclear-war movement will upset the current balance of power, and the risk of a holocaust will be increased.

I think he assumes that because the Soviet Union's government is not modeled after those in the West, it is not susceptible to popular pressure. All that can really be said is that the process of public pressure is not as orderly or as safe in the Soviet Union.

The antinuclear-war movement, by calling our attention to the breathtaking horrors of World War III, helps to redefine the environment within which foreign policy decisions are made. If world government seems utopian, it should be contrasted with the possible results of a war-fighting strategy based on traditional "national interests." If the pressure of the antinuclear-war movement will help substitute diplomacy for the demonology that reigns in the White House today, so much the better.

ROGER WHITE

I thought Michael Kinsley's article "Nuclear Holocaust in Perspective" was very good. Part of the pleasure came, of course, from finally finding an article that said more or less what I have been thinking. The speeches about feeling powerless in the face of government's dark whimsy remind me of Kafka's childhood memories of his father; the certainty of the judgment that no violence, war, or anger is justified seems designed to repress; and the recent technique of using small children as moral witnesses is either perverse or cruel, or both.

The old argument that we must protect "civilization as we know it" from nuclear war seems less than absolute to me. Certainly I don't want anyone to die, and the destruction of "civilization as we know it" would be damned inconvenient, if not fatal. But this civilization has no great claim to perpetuity, however much I happen to like it. Civilizations have come and gone; this one will too, one day. And yet many of the people insisting that this civilization continue seem to be the very ones least satisfied with the way it is turning out. Schell, at least, has moved beyond this: he is not arguing for civilization, but for biology. Moral issues evaporate in this biological imper-

ative, since true values are not to be found individually or intellectually. The only value is biological, and with that the integrity of each individual is lost, since the lowest category that matters—in Schell's great scale of being—is the species, mankind considered as a whole (and only as a whole).

MICHEL RENÉ BARNES
Toronto, Ont.
Canada

Dissenting voice

While I don't agree entirely with Tom Bethell's views ["Propaganda Warts," *Harper's*, May], I will concentrate simply on correcting certain of his errors. He says, "The foreign service information officers who come from the State Department to do a two-year stint at VOA were seen, with some reason, as pussyfoot bureaucrats forever trying to water down Voice broadcasts into State Department releases." Much of Mr. Bethell's argument is built around the erroneous assumption that many State Department officers work at VOA, myself among them. In fact, there is only one State Department employee at the Voice. That person is on leave to our newly formed personnel department. Foreign service information officers, like other VOA staffers, are career employees with the U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA). When in the U.S., they spend tours of duty in many sections of USICA, including VOA, the agency's radio service. They are hardly likely to imitate State Department releases, which they rarely, if ever, see.

Finally, remarks of mine, when excerpted by *U.S. News & World Report*, gave an impression that is contrary to my beliefs. I believe, and wanted to express to *U.S. News & World Report*, that I consider the Soviet Union to be an anachronism in today's world and in no way riding the tide of history. The U.S. must, however, do better at explaining our positions, values, and standards around the world. I was quoted correctly by both *U.S. News & World Report* and Mr. Bethell as saying we were doing nothing at the time of the interview to exacerbate tensions in Poland. This was the position of the entire administration, trying to avoid making things even worse for the Polish people.

TERRENCE F. CATHERMAN
Deputy Director
Voice of America
Washington, D.C.

Projects, people, places

In the manner of Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney ["Live Six Months With a Millionaire," *Harper's*, May], I, a middle-aged, less than affluent housewife, have decided to put down a few of the exciting moments of the year to distribute to friends at Christmas, if I have any left.

On the stroke of midnight New Year's Eve my husband and I were living it up at a party in the home of a friend, who was making bowl after bowl of wonderful rum punch. People were dancing the Charleston and the Funky Chicken, and new steps never tried before. Some were singing "Five-Foot-Two, Eyes of Blue" and old World War II ditties, some of which were ribald. It was a wild Texas night, colder than a witch's tit.

On New Year's Day we felt fine and had company. We have no servants. Not a damn one! Like Mary, I cook. We were able to serve dinner. My husband is sixty-two. He helps. Alas, we forgot to pray for anybody, and I hope no one suffered unduly. I made two resolutions, and have forgotten them.

It is hell finding a new place for lunch every day! I solve this by making lunch myself. We almost never have crab bisque, chicken with ham biscuits, Bibb lettuce, and such. Today, for example, we had creamed leftover roast beef on toast, from a famous army recipe, and a a bit of broccoli.

I was pretty sure all the VIPs in the country went to Florida in winter. We don't have to be bothered with them up here in the Panhandle. Too cold. On Friday, in March, it was still around zero, and since we have no Executive Jet Lear, we took a hot bath together.

I have often thought about the pleasures of being a millionaire, having rubbed elbows with a few. Now I don't believe there's all that much difference in our lifestyles!

MARION L. WHITLOCK
Amarillo, Tex.



Report from the Letters Lady

Oh, dear. Sometimes it seems we just can't do anything right. This month Robert Wright complains about the Letters section. "Who are all these bimbos? Why are you giving them space? I don't care if a bunch of nits don't happen to like this article or that article." The trouble is, these nits and bimbos are the only audience we've got. Mr. Wright hails from East Berlin, Nova Scotia. Does his place of residence have anything to do with his totalitarian views on freedom of expression? But in any case, by the very act of affixing stamp to envelope Mr. Wright undermines his own protest.

What a vitriolic bunch you are! Let me quickly pass over John Earl of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, who scrawls a sneering, ill-thought-out missive that culminates in the postscript: "I don't have a typewriter but you won't print this anyway." This is the last time I will be publicizing such churlishness. I must admit, however, that for once the editor has seen fit to allot the letters enough space, so the storm of protest above is fairly representative of this month's mailbag.

To end on a more positive note: we were moved by a letter about James Kenneson's April article, "China Stinks." The author is a recent Chinese emigré whose eloquence deserves extensive quotation: "When my eyes were first caught by the title, I felt insult. How China, like fish, stinks. With anger, I began to read it. But little by little my anger receded. Instead, my heart was filled with sorrow. I have to say what you depict and narrate is true, just the reality of today's China. . . . Surely you will be attacked and screamed about by China's authorities, but we, the Chinese with reason and conscience, will not blame you. We know when the things that a mirror reflects are ugly, we should not blame the mirror; rather we should search and eliminate the ugly source in reality." A testimony any publication can be proud of. □

HOW TO SAVE YOUR LIFE AND THE ONE NEXT TO YOU

OVERCOMING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE TO SEAT BELTS MAY BE THE KEY.

The facts are startling. Experts estimate that almost half of all automobile occupant fatalities and many serious injuries might have been avoided if the people had been wearing seat belts. That's because most injuries occur when the car stops abruptly and the occupants are thrown against the car's interior or out of the car. Belts reduce this risk.

Many people say they know the facts, but they still don't wear belts. Their reasons range all over the lot: seat belts are troublesome to put on, they are uncomfortable, or they wrinkle your clothes. Some people even think getting hurt or killed in a car accident is a question of fate; and, therefore, seat belts don't matter.

If you're one of those people who don't use belts for one reason or another, please think carefully about your motivations. Are your objections to seat belts based on the facts or on rationalizations?

Here are a few of the common rationalizations. Many people say they are afraid of being trapped in a car by a seat belt. In fact, in the vast majority of cases, seat belts protect passengers from severe injuries, allowing them to escape more quickly. Another popular rationalization: you'll be saved by being thrown clear of the car. Here again, accident data have proved that to be untrue—you are almost always safer inside the car.

Some people use seat belts for highway driving, but rationalize it's not worth the trouble to buckle up for short trips. The numbers tell a different story: 80% of all automobile accidents causing serious injury or death involve cars traveling under 40 miles per hour. And three quarters of all collisions happen less than 25 miles from the driver's home.

When you're the driver, you have the psychological authority to convince all of the passengers that they should wear seat belts. It has been shown that in a car, the driver is considered to be an authority figure. A simple reminder from you may help save someone's life.

Another common myth: holding a small child in your arms will provide the child with sufficient protection during a crash. The safety experts disagree. They point out that even during a 30 mph collision, a 10-pound child can exert a 300-pound force against the parent's grip. So please make sure Child Restraint Systems are used for children who aren't old enough to use regular seat belts.

If you're an employer, encourage your employees to wear seat belts. At GM, we've made it a matter of policy that everyone riding in company-owned vehicles is expected to wear lap and shoulder belts.

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MENTAL CASES

by Michael Kinsley

Meet the new legal doctrine of psychological pollution.

A FEDERAL appeals court in Washington ruled on May 14 that the Unit One nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island cannot reopen until the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has considered the psychological effect on the neighboring community. This is not the reactor that malfunctioned. That was Unit Two. Unit One happened to have been shut down for refueling at the time of the accident in March 1979. It has been shut ever since, pending NRC approval for it to reopen.

A group called People Against Nuclear Energy argues that reopening the undamaged Unit One would cause "severe psychological distress" to people living near the reactor and would aggravate the "post-traumatic neurosis" they are still suffering from the accident three years ago. PANE also argues that reopening Unit One would severely harm the "stability, cohesiveness and well-being of the communities" nearby and (as the court put it) would "impose great strains on the community infrastructure." The court ruled that under the National Environmental Policy Act, the NRC must make a preliminary study of PANE's psychological concerns and, if a full-fledged "environmental impact statement" is deemed warranted. consider the social concerns as well.

This is the first time a court has ordered the government to assess the psychological impact of its actions under the environmental laws. Some may scoff at the idea that reopening an undamaged nuclear plant could "cause intense anxiety, tension and fear, accompanied by physical disorders including skin rashes, aggravated ulcers, and skeletal and muscular problems," but anything's possible. The absurdity of this latest chapter in the legal battle over nuclear power lies elsewhere.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission was already obligated by law to consider any nonpsychological health risk to the neighbors before permitting TMI-1 to reopen. It has spent over three years fulfilling this obligation, and generated 22,000 pages of hearing transcripts. (This is just on the plant that *didn't* break down, mind you.) At the time of the latest court ruling, the NRC was holding up a plan to reopen TMI-1 at just 5 percent of full power, pending an investigation of whether two supervisors may have cheated on an exam. So if there is any rational cause for people to break out in hives at the thought of TMI-1 reopening, the NRC is already committed to finding it and keeping the plant shut.

Based on the NRC's record, people may justifiably fear that it will overlook some real danger in reopening the plant. But the court's ruling doesn't reduce this risk at all. The only effect of the new "psychological impact" doctrine is to require the NRC to consider people's *unjustified* fears as well as their justified ones. Now unjustified fears can be quite real. But whose fault is it if people are scared sick with no basis in fact? Surely the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Metropolitan Edison Company (TMI's owner) are less to blame than groups like People Against Nuclear Energy. It's a wonderful arrangement. Having generated hysteria, the opponents of nuclear power are now in a position to argue that, even if they cannot prove their case, the hysteria itself is a reason to ban nuclear power.

A similar self-justifying glow infuses the idea that a nuclear plant can undermine the stability of the community. PANE argues, according to the court, that citizens around Three Mile Island "have lost confidence in the ability of community institutions to function effectively during a crisis," and that the polity will crack under the strain of a reopened plant. PANE has spent three years encouraging exactly this loss of confidence. No doubt it has also flooded the NRC with evidence that the lack of confidence is warranted. But now the court has ruled that this lack of confidence can be enough to keep the plant shut, whether it is warranted or not.

THE foregoing is not intended as an endorsement of nuclear power. Truly, it's an issue I don't know what to think about. In fact, this new "psychological impact" doctrine is most interesting because of what it suggests about the way we, as a society and as individuals, reach decisions about complex technological matters that are beyond most of us.

It is unlikely that even the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia will ever rule that psychological stress justifies the permanent closing of a nuclear plant worth hundreds of millions of dollars. But this is far less important to nuclear opponents than

the triumph of having psychological stress ruled as yet another factor that must be considered, because consideration means delay.

The purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act (source of the "environmental impact statement") is to ensure that the government considers all the potential effects before it reaches an important policy decision. In practice, thanks to skilled lawyers and judges, the government often considers all the potential effects *instead of* reaching a decision. No one has officially decided that we should abandon nuclear power, but the nuclear industry has been essentially stopped dead by procedural maneuvering. A currently fashionable neorealist argument among nuclear power opponents is that, whatever its underlying merits, nuclear power is now simply too expensive. The main reason it has become too expensive, of course, is the cost and delay involved in getting a plant approved over the objections of nuclear power opponents.

A high-minded objection to this unique American arrangement for making important government decisions, besides its irrationality, is that it's undemocratic. Important social policy should be made by the legislature, not by the courts, and certainly not by default. A related, low-minded objection is that one's pleasure at the arrangement depends entirely on whose ox is gored. Conservative "public interest" groups are already trying to get courts to knock down environmental regulations on the grounds that their "social impact" is to raise costs and therefore eliminate jobs. "Psychological impact" is an argument ready-made for almost any conceivable defense of tranquillity and the status quo. How long can it be before someone's citing studies to show the alleged adverse psychological impact of busing for desegregation on white communities?

Of course even—or especially—if the processes of social decision were more democratic and more rational, we would all have to make up our minds as individuals. On a subject like nuclear power, where most of us have neither the time nor the competence to weigh the issues ourselves, an important part of reaching a conclusion must be deciding which side's spokesmen you trust more. There are reasons to distrust the nuclear industry. Its arguments are self-interested, obviously, its record is poor, and its propaganda machinery is a bit too lavish to inspire confidence. On the other hand, the consumer and environmental movements—sources of the movement against nuclear power—have been enormous forces for good in this country. But how can I take seriously or on faith their other arguments against nuclear power, when they insist that the Indian Point nuclear plant near New York should be *shut down* because "parents, teachers, doctors, and other caretakers of children feel anxiety" about Indian Point, and "these anxieties are communicated to children"? In North Carolina, a group of law students has filed papers to deny an operating license for a nuclear plant on the grounds that they "must study long and hard to prepare for their classes" and the thought of a nuclear plant operating nearby "will detract from their studies." This argument may delay that plant for a few months, or even permanently, but it does their cause no credit, and credit is exactly what their cause depends on.

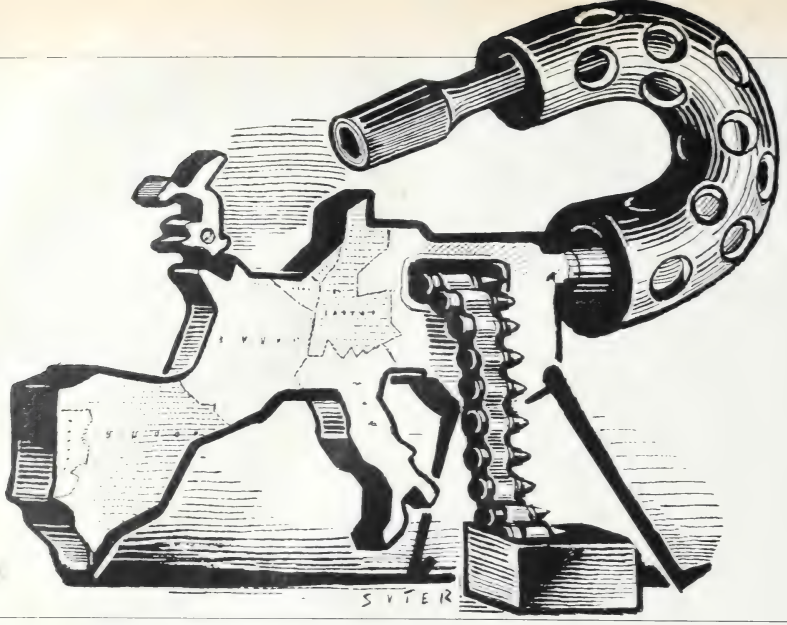
The courts have rejected community anxiety as a valid "environmental impact" consideration in the decision to build a prison (though such anxiety would seem to be at least as well grounded as anxiety about living near a nuclear plant), because judges know that there must be prisons and they must plop somewhere. Nuclear plants needn't plop anywhere, but what will replace them if they don't? As the dissenting judge pointed out in the TMI-1 decision, an average of 150 lives are lost each year in coal-mining accidents. Judge Wilkey wrote:

> *What is the state of "psychological health" or "community well-being" in Appalachia after a mine accident? Or indeed at any time? . . . Is it not significant that the risks of mining coal (and the psychological stress and trauma in the surrounding communities) are borne by a group of Americans who could hardly be called privileged, while the risks of nuclear power (so far, nonfatal) are borne equally by rich and poor alike?*

Somehow the risk, however infinitesimal, of a large catastrophe overshadows the statistical certainty of regular small catastrophes in the public mind. And our legal machinery was already constructed to give the potential risks of any course of action far more weight than the potential benefits. Now it must weigh imaginary risks as well. □

Editorial Staff Changes

Attentive readers will have noticed a lot of new names sprouting on the *Harper's* masthead recently, especially this month, and may be wondering who they all are. Jan Drews, our art director and creator of *Harper's* new design and graphics, has worked at ABC News and NBC News and has designed many covers for the *New Republic*. Helen Rogan, who was at *Harper's* from 1976 through 1978, has returned as associate editor. Her book about women in the military, *Mixed Company*, was published last year by Putnam's. Robert M. Kaus, who joins us this month as politics editor, was most recently a columnist and editor at the *American Lawyer*. He has also been an editor of the *Washington Monthly* and an attorney with the Federal Trade Commission. Robert Asahina, who joins us as arts editor, was most recently an editor of *The New York Times Book Review*. Previously he was an editor at *GEO* and managing editor of the *Public Interest*. James Wolcott, who will be contributing a monthly literary column, was the books columnist for *Esquire*. He also reviews movies for *Texas Monthly*, and is on sabbatical as TV critic for the *Village Voice*. **M. E. K.**



David Suter

ENDING THE AMERICAN PROTECTORATE OF EUROPE

Why we should dissolve NATO and bring home our troops.

by Ronald Steel

FOR NEARLY thirty-five years the alliance with western Europe has been the cornerstone of American foreign policy. It formally joins us to societies with which we share a cultural heritage, a political tradition, and an economic network. Even without the military framework of NATO, we would be very close to the nations of western Europe. But the military link is what gives the relationship a unique meaning.

Yet the striking deterioration of the American economy, the enormous cost of global military commitments, and the mounting dangers of our present nuclear strategy all require us to reexamine our system of alliances, especially our military relationship with western Europe.

That relationship grew out of very special circumstances. The terrible destruction of Europe's last civil war brought about the collapse of the great European empires: France, Britain, and Germany. Russia alone emerged as a major European power, gravely wounded by the war, but intent on carving a sphere of influence in the states that the West had set up a generation earlier as a *cordon sanitaire* against Bolshevism. Between 1945 and 1948, though, that sphere of influence was transformed—through a process of events historians have argued about ever since—into a satellite empire.

The Atlantic alliance was created primarily in response to the Soviet Union's assertion of control over eastern Europe. There were good reasons for apprehension that the Russians, perhaps in conjunction with European communist parties, might try to expand their empire westward through force or subversion. The governments of western Europe seemed weak and demoralized. They looked to the United States for help—both economic help, in the form of dollar infusions, and military help, in the form of defense promises.

American officials were eager to respond. Caught up in the flush of the great victory over Germany and Japan, exhilarated by a sense of

Ronald Steel, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, is the author of several books on foreign policy and of the prize-winning Walter Lippmann and the American Century.

mission that had been frustrated since the disappointments following World War I, and seeing themselves as the protectors and even inheritors of Europe, American leaders eagerly embraced their new self-assigned responsibilities.

At the heart of the postwar stratagems was the problem of Germany. Defeated, occupied by armies that were quickly changing from allies to rivals, Germany was a prize of incalculable value in what was perceived to be the emerging struggle for Europe. Neither the Americans nor the Russians could allow this prize to fall into the hands of the other. The struggle for Germany became central to the struggle for Europe. The Americans created a West German state from the western occupation zones, and the Russians built a state of their own in the east. Those states became incorporated into their rival alliances. They still are. The alliances subsequently came not only to reflect the division of Europe but to sustain it.

The United States offered protection to West Germany and its neighbors at a time when those nations were very weak. The purpose of the alliance, as described to Congress at the time by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, was to provide a shield behind which the Europeans—temporarily relieved of the burden of creating a strong defense force—would be able to rebuild their economies. To provide psychological support during this period of dependency, and to relieve the Europeans of the need to divert resources from recovery to weapons, the United States agreed to maintain a large number of soldiers in western Europe.

It was never anticipated—at least by the Senate that ratified the North Atlantic treaty in 1949—that an American army would remain in western Europe for decades. Indeed, Acheson specifically reassured a concerned Sen. Robert Taft that the Truman administration had no such intentions. Perhaps he meant it. But events, as well as opportunities, have a way of overtaking intentions. The United States has not only remained in Europe far longer than the founders of the alliance anticipated, but has transformed a temporary protectorship into an immutable principle of its foreign policy.

THERE may be persuasive reasons for this principle, but in assessing them, it is worth keeping the original purposes of NATO in mind. Only then will we be able to distinguish between a habit and a need, and to determine whether an alliance formed under very different circumstances remains a valid expression of American interests today.

Certainly, conditions have changed dramatically since the formation of NATO. The war-weakened nations of western Europe have not only restored their economies, but some have attained for their citizens standards of living higher than our own. The United States, by the same token, no longer enjoys the enormous trade surpluses of the early postwar years. Indeed, those surpluses have turned into massive balance-of-payments deficits.

Where the problem was once to spend as many dollars as possible to stimulate the world economy, more recently it has been to prevent the international economic system from foundering in a flood of paper dollars churned out by a profligate Treasury. Thus on an economic level the alliance has been completely transformed, and the imbalance of resources that originally inspired it no longer exists. Indeed, in some respects the Europeans are better able to pay the costs of defense than are the Americans.

At the military level, the situation is also very different. The United States made its pledge to defend western Europe at a time when it enjoyed vast nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union. The pledge was persuasive because it seemed to involve relatively few risks. We could assure the Soviets of destruction of their society should they attack western Europe, without ourselves suffering retaliation in kind. A deterrent so one-sided seemed virtually foolproof and cost-free.

That situation, it hardly seems necessary to underline, no longer exists. Today we are in a position of rough nuclear parity with the Soviet Union. Each nation has the power to destroy the other. A war fought at such a level of destruction is truly beyond rational objective. But such a war is very possible, and indeed becoming increasingly likely as nuclear arsenals continue to grow and military planners abandon the deceptively reassuring theories of deterrence for so-called "limited" nuclear options—in other words, nuclear war.

This change of conditions transforms the nature of the American guarantee to western Europe. Europeans have legitimate reason to question whether any American president would deliberately risk the nuclear devastation of the United States in response to, let us say, a Soviet move across the East German frontier, or perhaps an outbreak of fighting between the two Germanys. To assuage European anxieties over the credibility of "massive retaliation," American strategists in the Kennedy administration two decades ago posited a theory they called "flexible response." They installed smaller tactical or "battlefield" nuclear weapons in Europe, both to reassure the Europeans about nuclear deterrence and to compensate for the fact that the Soviets had a bigger army than the west Europeans were willing to assemble.

But the new strategy did not allay European fears. The so-called battlefield nuclear weapons—many thousands of which have been deployed in western Europe, with thousands more to come under the Reagan administration's plan—are more powerful than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Flexible response" is no more satisfactory an answer for Europe than "massive retaliation" was. Under either doctrine Europe might become a nuclear battlefield, and the decision was not in European hands. As General de Gaulle said in 1963, "No one in America can say if, where, how, or to what extent American nuclear weapons would be employed to defend Europe." What was true then is no less true today.









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The current debate over the first use of so-called battlefield nuclear weapons on the Continent dramatizes long-standing European anxieties and the inherent conflict between American and European interests. For the most part the NATO allies, and particularly the Germans, are opposed to renouncing first use. This may seem an anomaly. If such weapons were ever used, they would utterly destroy Germany, and probably most of western Europe as well. The simple laws of survival would seem to dictate that all nations pledge not to be the first to use such weapons.

But Europeans understandably do not want to think that nuclear weapons might be used, any more than Americans do, or for that matter Russians. They prefer to focus on deterrence: that is, to believe that the mere threat to use atomic weapons will dissuade the Russians from launching any kind of war, nuclear or conventional. In addition, if the West were to renounce first use, the Europeans would have to build a conventional army capable of balancing that of the Russians. They could certainly do this, for they have both the manpower and the means. The population of western Europe is larger than that of the Warsaw Pact countries, including the Soviet Union, and its wealth is far greater.

But the Europeans do not want to spend the money that would be involved. It would mean diverting resources from the civilian economy to the military. It would mean higher taxes, a lessened ability to compete in world markets, and a somewhat lower standard of living. Naturally, politicians are loath to ask such sacrifices of voters. This would not bring them popularity or win them elections. They would prefer, quite reasonably, to cross their fingers, hope for the best, and rely on the terrible, though intangible, threat of deterrence and on American protection.

This is the main reason why they insist that the United States keep an army on the Continent. They do not want to fill the gap themselves, which they would have to do if the Americans left, and they want to keep the American nuclear guarantee credible. If enough GIs are there, the Europeans reason, the United States will immediately be drawn into any European war. The GIs are, in other words, hostages to NATO's nuclear strategy. This is what they have always been. This is why their presence is sacrosanct to the Europeans.

WHY so many GIs? Why 350,000, plus an equal number of dependents, as there are today? No special reason other than that they are already there, and any effort to withdraw them would have a symbolic significance. If there were, say, a million American soldiers in western Europe, that would be the magic figure, and anything less would be considered folly. The point is that there is no correct number. It is mostly symbolic: a symbol of commitment. Withdrawal could signal that the United States might not automatically and immediately be drawn into a war on the Continent.

A strategy designed to assuage the Europeans' feelings and provide a rationale for their military dependence also holds great dangers for them. It means they are basing their defense on weapons that will destroy them if ever used. Yet the decision on their use is outside their control. This is a problem inherent in the structure of NATO. For the most part, they have tried to evade the problem by pretending it does not exist. They have been encouraged in this effort by American officials, resistant to a more self-reliant Europe responsible for its own defense and diplomacy.

Only General de Gaulle two decades ago had the temerity to point out that the emperor had no clothes. Only the French listened to him, and as a result, France today has an independent military force, including its own deterrent, and an independent foreign policy. By offering the means for Europe to become responsible for its defense, de Gaulle was pursuing the original intentions of NATO. This infuriated American officials, particularly during the Kennedy administration, for by then they had come to enjoy their protectorate over Europe. They did not want to lose it, despite the costs and risks it involved.

Ironically, France is considered the most responsible American ally in Europe today. De Gaulle, though he was pilloried by American officials in his time, understood that self-reliance breeds respect. If he had lived long enough, he would have seen his analysis respected by those who denigrated him.

The passing of de Gaulle, and his failure to achieve his vision of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals," pushed the problem of Europe off the American foreign policy agenda, but it did nothing to resolve the problem. The current strategy of reliance on front-line "battlefield" nuclear weapons poses great dangers for the United States as well as for Europe. It means that the outbreak of hostilities on the central front, however it may be initiated, could rapidly degenerate, through a series of steps which no one could accurately foresee or guard against, into a full-scale nuclear war that would destroy the United States as a nation. Never before has an alliance involved such risks. When the United States came to the aid of the European democracies in 1917 and 1941 it risked something, but never its survival. Atomic weapons have raised the stakes of alliances without having changed their terms.

To be sure, it must be a supreme objective of American diplomacy to prevent western Europe from falling into Soviet hands. It is an even greater European objective. But the methods best designed to achieve such an objective are not self-evident. Some involve terrible costs and risks, and others, fewer. Deterrence is not a science. It is a hope and at best a gamble. Much of it is merely wishful thinking and even self-deception. No one knows what would happen if nuclear weapons were ever used in battle. No one knows whether a "limited" nuclear war could ever be stopped before all the participants were destroyed. That is why it is an American interest to

avoid being the first to use nuclear weapons, whether in Europe or anywhere else.

The problem is to get the Europeans to understand this. For very good reasons they resist doing so. They do not want to pay for larger conventional forces, even though they could if they wanted to. They prefer to rely on a strategy that, however dangerous and even irrational, has worked so far. This in itself becomes a reason for continuing the game—a game sometimes compared to chess, but more like Russian roulette.

If the Europeans do not want to make this effort, they must be helped. But here we confront a further anomaly. American officials do not want to help them. They do not want to reduce Europe's reliance on nuclear weapons—indeed they are insisting that the Europeans accept thousands more such weapons on their soil, including long-range weapons capable of striking the Soviet Union directly. Nor do they want to decrease the American military presence on the Continent.

Why not? Because the troops and the nuclear dependence seem to offer some leverage over the Europeans. If the NATO allies built a larger conventional army and assumed the full cost of their own defense, they would demand responsibility for it. There is no reason for them to take on the costs without gaining the benefits. Yet this would mean the United States would lose some degree of control over its allies, just as it lost control over France when de Gaulle pulled his military units out of NATO.

THE ISSUE is control. But how much does "control" mean? In the past it meant a lot. In economic matters, the Europeans were supportive to the point of compliance. Throughout the 1960s they accepted an ever-mounting pile of paper dollars as though they were based on a solid, stable currency. In so doing, they helped to finance both the Vietnam war and the Great Society. But this system collapsed in the early 1970s under the sheer weight of inflation-weakened dollars, and with it went most of the advantages of what the Europeans called U.S. "dollar hegemony."

Political hegemony, for its part, has never lived up to its billing. The Europeans have followed the American lead when it suited them, and stayed on the sidelines when it did not—as in the Korean and Vietnam wars, and our recent peace efforts in the Middle East. Though Europeans may be militarily dependent on the United States, most of them go their own way on such issues as Central America, trade with the Soviet bloc, Afghanistan, Poland, and the Arab-Israeli quarrel. They may or may not be right in their judgments. But "hegemony" should have more tangible rewards—considering that in fiscal 1981 the estimated cost of U.S. forces devoted directly or indirectly to the defense of western Europe was $81 billion. Removing and decommissioning six of the present ten U.S. divisions assigned to NATO would result in an estimated annual saving of $30 billion.

The real benefits of the NATO alliance, it would seem, are not economic or political but psychological. American officials are accustomed to thinking globally. They like to speak for, as well as to, western Europe, to define America's greatness in terms of its ability to orchestrate a global network of alliances, protectorates, and dependencies. Any lessening of that control seems to involve a reduction of status and power. This is particularly difficult for an administration obsessed with military power, which is now intent on recapturing an absolute military superiority over the Soviets as the means to implement its diplomacy.

Such a goal was far more feasible in the past than it is today—a fact that makes so much of the Reaganite policy, both foreign and domestic, seem an exercise in nostalgia. America's share of world production has declined from 50 percent in 1945 to only 20 percent today—and, if current trends continue, will decline to only 10 percent by the end of this decade. Yet the administration is pursuing a foreign policy based on conditions of the late 1940s, when the U.S. held a virtual monopoly on wealth and on military power.

That outdated policy has been hard to change, since its force rests more on psychology than statistics. Only the Reagan budget, with its enormous increases for the military at the expense of social programs and the living standard of most Americans, has brought home the true cost of trying to maintain a dated relationship with our allies and a policy of military engagement throughout the third world.

The time has come to draw to a close a historically necessary, but now outdated and undesirable, military relationship with Europe. The United States no longer has the means to be the defender of Europe and to quell social discontent in the entire noncommunist world. Nor are the advantages of trying to do so self-evident. Our own society is suffering the effects of a bloated and self-aggrandizing foreign policy that is sacrificing the welfare of the American people to grandiose and unrealizable foreign objectives. The purpose of NATO, it is well to recall, was not that the United States should maintain a permanent protectorate over Europe, but that it should temporarily stand guard while the Europeans restored their economies and developed the means to defend themselves.

Shortly after leaving office, Dwight Eisenhower said: "For eight years in the White House I believed that a reduction of American strength in Europe should be initiated as soon as the European economies were restored. I believe the time has now come for withdrawing some of those troops." That was twenty years ago.

For a long time it was both self-flattering and useful to be the generous protector of a defenseless Europe. But the baby in swaddling clothes is now a 200-pound adolescent, and the United States no longer has the economic surplus to do for others what for a long time they have been capable of doing for themselves. □



BOWLING WITH DR. MENGELE

by Jeff B. Harmon

A country where important people still go around saying "Heil Hitler."

THE tourist poster at the Paraguayan mission to the United Nations reads PARAGUAY—LAND OF PEACE AND SUN. But this landlocked country the size of California is also a place of dark rumors and wars that have periodically decimated the country's population, irrevocably altering its national character.

The War of the Triple Alliance (1865-70) against Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay reduced Paraguay's population from 525,000 to 220,000 in less than five years. Only 28,000 males survived the disastrous war, which ended only when Paraguayan dictator Francisco Solano López was killed in battle. Marshal López, whose affinity for bloodshed did not tarnish his claim to immortality, is portrayed as a hero in Paraguayan history books.

By the time Paraguay's population had returned to the prewar level, the Chaco War (1932–35) had broken out between Paraguay and Bolivia, further diminishing the population. Paraguay won the war at a cost of 36,000 dead—at least one Paraguayan life for each square mile of the desolate Chaco scrubland that was secured in the war. Violent revolutions in 1936 and 1947 added to the country's turmoil and increased the numbers of the dead.

Successive Paraguayan governments strongly encouraged immigration in order to replenish their war-depleted population. Germans were among the first nationalities to arrive in considerable numbers. Those who braved the hard life that Paraguay offered them in the 1880s were, for the most part, highly conservative, and some were also eccentric.

FIFTY YEARS before Hitler's ascent to power, the Teutonic colony of Nueva Germania was founded in central Paraguay by Dr. Bernhard Förster, a Berlin schoolteacher and leading figure of the late-nineteenth-century anti-Semitic council known as the "German Seven"—and also brother-in-law of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

The seeds of Nueva Germania were planted on November 8, 1880, when Dr. Förster bellowed out several unpleasant remarks directed at Jewish passengers in a Berlin streetcar. Some of the passengers took offense and a scuffle ensued, resulting in Förster's public disgrace. Dr. Förster further compounded his notoriety by organizing a petition in 1881, signed by 267,000 people, which demanded the compulsory registration of all Jews as well as their exclusion from the national life of the Reich—ideals formalized by the Nazis a half century later in the Nuremburg laws.

It was becoming apparent to Dr. Förster that his visions of an Aryan utopia were not fully appreciated in Bismarck's Second Reich. After the streetcar incident and the petition, Förster was forced to resign his teaching post. Jobless and in disrepute, he embarked on a course that was to be followed by future generations of Germans with the same philosophical bent.

Dr. Förster moved to Paraguay, initially to San Bernardino, Paraguay's first German colony. Then, in November 1886, Dr. Förster and his wife, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, founded Nueva Germania. Elisabeth's philosopher brother wrote to their mother at the time: "Because of this species of men [anti-Semites] I could not go to Paraguay: I am so happy that they voluntarily exile themselves from Europe."

Germans have continued exiling themselves to Paraguay ever since, most of them attracted by the country's conservative political and fiscal policies. (There is still no income tax, and President Alfredo Stroessner is perhaps the world's most vocal anticommunist leader.) Out of a current population of approximately 3.15 million, 95 percent are a mixture of Spanish and Guaraní Indian, and 2 percent are Paraguayans of German descent. Yet the approximately 60,000 Paraguayan Germans are the most powerful ethnic group in the country. There ar[illegible] of

Jeff Harmon

Jeff B. Harmon is chief foreign correspondent for Montcalm News Service and has previously contributed to Harper's.

TOOLS FOR LIVING

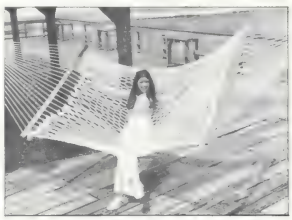
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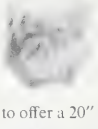
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DUST MAGNET



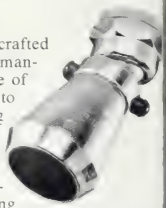
If we ever compile a book on *The Old Ways That Were Better Ways*, we will certainly include a chapter on the lambswool duster. This remarkable implement originated, the best we can tell, in 19th-century England where it quickly put the feather-duster to shame. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. When soiled, just wash it in warm soapy water. Let it dry, fluff it out and store it, hanging from a conveniently located hole at the end of its handle. We are happy to offer a 20″ authentic lambswool duster for **$8.00** ($1.95) #A163.

A MIGHTY LITTLE FAN



The most important qualities of a household fan are safety, quietness, portability and force enough to get the air circulating. We've found a little power-house of a fan that meets all these criteria admirably. This two-speed fan is completely safe—if the spin of the soft plastic blades is interrupted, the fan simply stops. It moves an impressive volume of air and its operation is nearly noiseless. Good air circulation is essential year round, especially if you're watching your energy dollars. In the winter this fan will help keep warm air off the ceiling; in the summer it will draw cool air off the floor where it will make you more comfortable. We have friends who keep one in the kitchen to help dissipate unpleasant cooking odors. Because of its small compact size it can be used practically anywhere: countertop, desk, windowsill or bathroom. With a chrome-plated motor housing and contrasting white blades, the little fans look as good as they work. We can supply them for **$26.00** ($2.95) #A516. We can send you the same fan with a durable white motor housing for **$25.00** ($2.95) #A523.

SAVINGS IN THE SHOWER



Tools For Living has discovered a finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver manufactured by Con-Serv, which cuts the use of water—*hot water*—in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. Remember, heating water throughout the year is second only to the cost of heating the house. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gals. of water—much of it heated—every day. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of between $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. The prototype of the Deluxe Fuel Saver was originally developed for use in the U.S. nuclear submarine program. Con-Serv designed the new Deluxe Fuel Saver expressly for the consumer, without compromising comfort or high quality. Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated—utilizing the Venturi principle—for an invigorating shower. It delivers a comfortable yet forceful spray—forceful enough to quickly rinse shampoo suds out of a long, thick mane of hair. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily over the standard ½″ shower head arm with pliers or a wrench—no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for **$16.00** ($2.95) #A351.

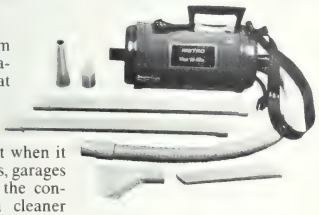
WATERING WHIZ

Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There *is* an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. Think of the steps waiting to be saved! This 50′ (that is a *lot* of each) vinyl hose readily attaches to any household faucet. From there you just take the water where you want it—an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off as needed.

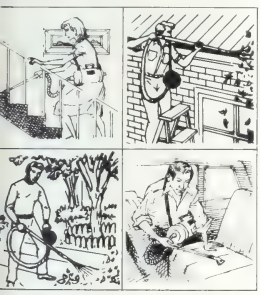


This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health as well as its beauty. The complete indoor garden hose kit costs just **$11.00** ($1.95) #A341. It will make your watering almost as simple as turning on the faucet.

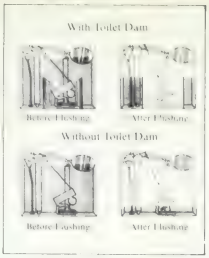
VAC-N-BLO



All vacuum cleaners are portable in the sense that they can be maneuvered quite easily from room to room. But when it comes to stairs, cars, garages and outdoor uses the conventional vacuum cleaner loses much of its portability. Here is a different breed of indoor/outdoor vacuum. The Metro Vac-n-Blo slips right over your shoulder, weighs less than 10 pounds and will go practically anywhere. Attach to one end and you have a vacuum with suction stronger than some full size canister machines. Attach to the other end and you have a 200 mph blower for cleaning walks and gutters and other outdoor jobs (there's even an adapter for blowing up inflatables). The Vac-n-Blo unit is made of steel with a permanent cloth bag and comes with a 3′ flexible hose, 2 20″ extension wands and 4 interchangeable nozzles. You will need to supply an extension cord. This UL listed Vac-n-Blo costs **$83.00** ($6.95) #512. The American manufacturer supplies a one-year warranty. For more convenient indoor use, there is a conversion kit with a 3-wheel roll-around dolly, 3′ flexible extension hose, dusting brush and swivel carpet/floor tool. **$22.00** ($2.95) #A513.

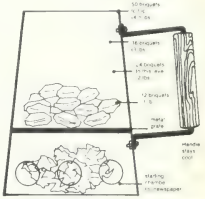


TOILET SANITY



A government study shows that 45% of the water used by the average American family gets flushed down the toilet. That is 90 gal. per day for the family of four. Such extravagance is unconscionable. The conventional flush toilet uses 5 to 8 gal. of clean fresh water each flush, when 2.5 to 3 gal. is sufficient. What can we do about this insanity? Use toilet dams. Putting a dam in the tank saves 1/3 to 1/2 the flush without reducing the toilet's effectiveness. (It doesn't reduce the *pressure* of the flush, just the amount of water used.) Putting dams in all your toilets could cut your overall water use (and bill) up to 20%—a vital savings in the parts of the country now affected by drought and a sensible step for everyone to take. For **$11.00** ($1.95), #A259, we can supply first-quality toilet dam units made of stainless steel and thermoplastic rubber. It comes with a 5-year manufacturer's limited warranty. It requires no tools (or special effort) to install and will pay for itself in a matter of months.

EASY EMBERS



The biggest hassle with charcoal cooking is getting the charcoal lit. To keep frustration levels among outdoor chefs manageable, a whole line of charcoal-starter fluids has come onto the market. But they are expensive, and it seems absurd to use a petroleum-base product in this era of short supply when it's far quicker, safer and tastier to fire your coals with Easy Embers charcoal lighter. Using a fireplace-like draft and newspaper, Easy Embers will ignite 4½ lb. of charcoal—enough to fill a large Weber kettle grill—in less than 10 min. You simply light one or two balled sheets of newspaper stuffed in the base of the heavy-gauge steel cylinder. The intense flames will ignite the charcoal briquets, placed on a steel grate just above the coals. When the briquets are fully ignited, simply pour them out of the container into your grill. The grate is securely fastened to the cylinder so there's no danger of it falling out and burning the cook. And because no fluids are used, there's no chance of lighter fluid flare-up. It costs **$15.00** ($2.95) #A433.



ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUARANTEE: We ship via United Parcel Service wherever possible to insure prompt delivery. The cost of each item is shown followed by its shipping and handling charges in ( ). Be sure to add the cost **plus** shipping and handling charges for each item ordered to arrive at the **total price** of each item. If you are not satisfied for any reason, return the article to us within 30 days, and we'll exchange it or refund the cost, per your instructions.

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Paraguay where it is more important to speak German than Spanish or Guaraní. President Stroessner, whose father, Hugo, a beer brewer, emigrated to Paraguay from Bavaria in the 1890s, has not forgotten his origins.

In present-day Nueva Germania —a dusty, rustic community ten miles from the main highway between Asunción and Concepción— Dr. Förster's barnlike residence still stands. The white wooden structure with four plain white pillars on the front porch looks like an impoverished version of Tara in *Gone With the Wind*. Nevertheless, Dr. Förster's house was and is the most impressive building in Nueva Germania, and it is currently part of the agricultural cooperative named in Dr. Förster's honor—the only trace of a monument to the settlement's founder.

Outside the cooperative, an ox cart is hitched up—still a common mode of transportation in Nueva Germania. Inside, the main room has been converted into a makeshift bar and general store. Agricultural workers sit in rattan chairs passing around a metal *jarro* of cold *maté*—each person in turn sipping the bitter green brew through an ornamental metal spoon.



A faded lithograph of Dr. Förster hangs on the wall of the cooperative's office, located in a one-story whitewashed building next door to Dr. Förster's former residence. Dr. Förster's stern countenance glares down at the stray oxen that wander in when their yokes are unharnessed, but it pales beside the bright colors of a 1979 poster commemorating twenty-five years in power for President Stroessner.

Few of Nueva Germania's approximately 4,510 inhabitants—most of whom are involved in the cultivation of *yerba maté*, the Paraguayan staple—are aware of the history of their town and its founder. Only a handful of Nueva Germania's older residents know any details about Herr Dr. Förster, whom they mistakenly identify in reverential tones as Nietzsche's son. (An idea that would have repelled Nietzsche, who once wrote to his sister Elisabeth that her marriage to Dr. Förster was "One of the greatest stupidities you have committed—for yourself and for me! Your association with an anti-Semitic chief expresses a foreignness to *my* whole way of life which fills me ever again with ire or melancholy.")

Dr. Förster's aged keepers of the flame choose not to mention that Nueva Germania's illustrious founder shot himself through the head to avoid bankruptcy and probable prosecution as a result of his unscrupulous financial dealings with the colony's original settlers. But then no one in Nueva Germania holds the past against any individual—not even Dr. Josef Mengele, Auschwitz's "Angel of Death," who has treated several patients in the town for blood disorders.

It was a search for Dr. Mengele that had brought me and Richard Reisen, a German photographer, to Nueva Germania. A German agricultural adviser in Asunción, Paraguay's capital 200 miles to the south, claimed he had spoken with Mengele in the town a week before. But Mengele was not in Nueva Germania.

As far as the Paraguayan government was officially concerned, Mengele was out of the country. The former SS captain, personally responsible for the murder of as many as 200,000 Jews at Auschwitz, received his Paraguayan citizenship on November 27, 1959, having come to Paraguay after Argentine president Juan Perón was overthrown. He lived under his own name in Asunción for many years, but the Stroessner government, under pressure from the Carter administration, revoked Mengele's citizenship on July 31, 1979, as a result of which he became elusive.

Reports of Mengele's presence around the country are still commonplace. In the south, an American expatriate living near the German community of Hohenau took me on a surreptitious drive to a windswept field. Pointing toward the horizon, he said, "I know for a fact that somewhere over there is where Dr. Mengele used to live until three years ago."

Mengele was always somewhere past the horizon. Journalists, Mossad agents, Nazi hunters from Simon Wiesenthal's office in Vienna, would always arrive a day, a month, a year too late. An old Paraguayan German laughed when I asked him about Mengele's whereabouts. "We have a joke in Paraguay," he said. "Even after Mengele is dead, you Jews will search and search and still never find the body."

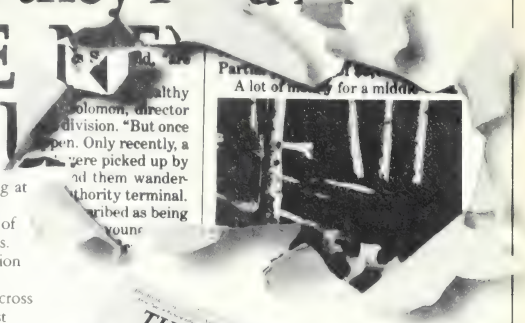
Had anyone ever seen Mengele? Most German Paraguayans with more than one beer in their gullet would say they had spoken with him. But most of their claims were nothing more than barroom braggadocio. To chance an encounter with Dr. Mengele is a sign of prestige, since Mengele is an emblem for the Paraguayan German communities—a living, breathing link with the Third Reich.

Strolling down the dirt path that is the main avenue of Nueva Germania, it is hard to imagine Mengele's presence, difficult to believe that he has sipped on a beer in the little cantina near where the bus to Santa Rosa stops, or chatted with friends in the little town's rambling one-story wooden ranch houses.

There is little sense of foreboding in the remnants of Dr. Förster's bucolic Aryan paradise. But a visitor who pays a surprise call on Nueva Germania's residents of German descent is likely to find paranoia wherever he goes.

The owner of a *maté* plantation snaps to attention when my German photographer and I enter his ware-

Some people get very angry over what they read in THE NEW REPUBLIC



Sometimes they're angry *at* us—we have a habit of jabbing at cherished political beliefs and philosophies. More often, they're angry *along with us*—sharing our outrage at some of the inanities that pass for reason in Washington these days.

But always, it's an anger of the noblest kind. The reaction of people who really care—who know that the search for truth can take some pretty aggravating twists and turns: across party lines, beyond conventional wisdoms, head-on against strong personal convictions.

Will THE NEW REPUBLIC make *you* angry? Only if you care about where our country is going in politics, foreign affairs, social justice, economics, the arts. Only if you're prepared to read some of the most provocative, compelling, cage-rattling journalism appearing anywhere today. By such lights as Morton Kondracke, John Kenneth Galbraith, Nicholas von Hoffman, Carl Bernstein, Joseph Alsop, Lester Thurow, Shirley Christian, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Garry Wills, Paul Fussell. And, of course, our own curmudgeonly "TRB," Richard Strout. For example:

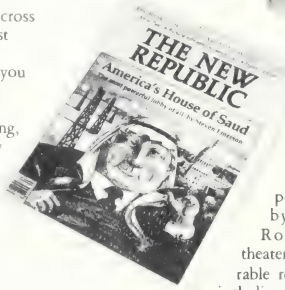
In a series of timely articles, THE NEW REPUBLIC explored the idea behind supply-side economics: that producers should be encouraged, through tax incentives, to produce. We agreed with the *idea*, but not the practice under *Reagan*. Are rich people, we asked, the true producers of wealth? Or just the most conspicuous consumers of it?

While everyone else was praising Japan's "miracle economy" to the skies, Daniel Yergin in THE NEW REPUBLIC predicted that the Japanese bullet train may be headed off the tracks. And for a reason you probably never thought of.

In several articles, we pointed out how giant corporations seem to be running American foreign policy. We didn't cite merely the obvious cases, like Chile. We showed how U.S. oil companies were propping up the Marxist regime in Angola and how banks were siding with the Russians against Solidarity in Poland. And a special investigative report in THE NEW REPUBLIC (reprinted later by newspapers around the country) revealed how Saudi Arabia secretly pressured corporations into lobbying to pass the AWACS bill.

While even many conservative publications urged a wait-and-see attitude shortly after martial law was imposed in Poland, THE NEW REPUBLIC took a tough line from the start.

And if you also tend to get emotional about things cultural, there's still more in store for you. Our outspoken TV critic, Mark Crispin Miller . . . who didn't hesitate to blast the phoniness of a sentimental special on race relations, or shy from praising a performer he thinks is a genius: Johnny Carson.



You'll also enjoy penetrating film reviews by Stanley Kauffmann. Robert Brustein's knowing theater coverage. And an incomparable roster of book reviewers, including Irving Howe, R.W.B. Lewis, Anne Tyler, Robert Coles and Alfred Kazin.

So if you're ready to be challenged, stimulated and excited . . . if you're ready for a weekly dose of information and insight from one magazine that doesn't care whose toes it steps on, yours included . . . you're ready for THE NEW REPUBLIC.

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house. The owner's wife, who is suffering from leprosy, is rumored to have been a patient of Dr. Mengele's. The owner is writing in a ledger. His hand begins to shake violently at our greeting, and a sightless eye, destroyed in the Chaco War, squints ominously at the uninvited guests. His wife peers in from the back and quickly darts away.

The residents of Nueva Germania are a close-knit group, and they do not enjoy chatting with strangers. For in Paraguay, a stranger might be a Nazi hunter, a journalist, a bearer of bad tidings. But the town holds one exception—a terminally ill German named Heinz who is Nueva Germania's leading, but cautious, anti-Nazi.

"*Wie geht's Ihnen*?" I ask Heinz as he welcomes us into his front yard, filled with cackling geese. "*Nicht gut, nicht gut*," he replies. "Paraguay no got colostomy bags." Heinz leads us into his house and proceeds to blow into his last colostomy bag, a present from Europe, checking for leaks. Heinz has two preoccupations, his recent operation and Dr. Mengele.

Spitting up blood into his handkerchief, Heinz confides his knowledge of Dr. Mengele. "Six or seven times I have seen Mengele here in Nueva Germania. His son acts as his bodyguard. He always wears sunglasses and never stays in the same house twice if he can help it.

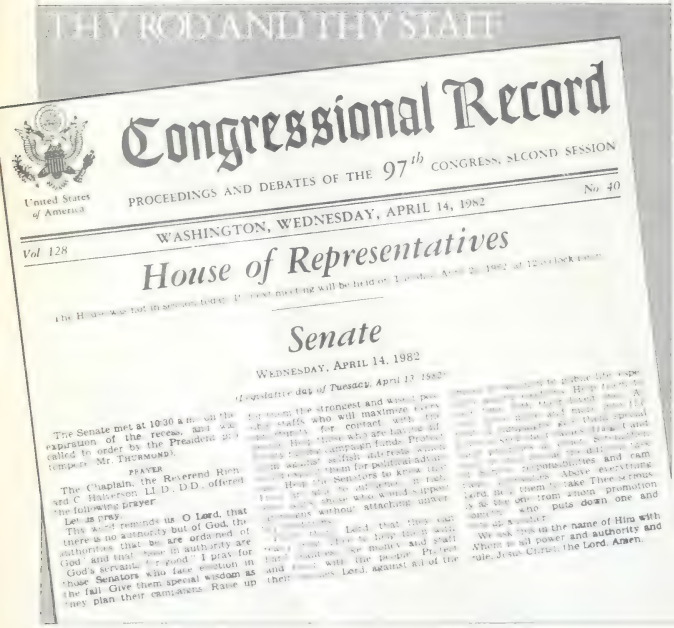
"The Germans in Paraguay protect him," he continues. "There is an old German aristocrat, von Hessel, whose father used to be a friend of Hindenburg's—he protects Mengele. Even the German Jews in Paraguay protect that swine. German Jews in Paraguay are pro-Hitler. They are Nazis. . . . Yes, yes, I must be careful. In Paraguay, anyone who is against Mengele will be shot!

"Once I was visited by the international police from Vienna," he says. "They thought I was a Nazi. This is not true. Of course, during the war, maybe a little bit." He proudly displays a picture of himself in the war years dressed in the uniform of a German navy enlisted man. "In those days everyone was.

"But nowadays, all the Paraguayans think that if you are a German, you must be a Nazi. There used to be a police commandant in Asunción who would always greet me with a '*Heil, Hitler*.' I would answer back '*drei Liter*' ['three liters'], saying the words very quickly so they sounded like '*Heil, Hitler*.' I hate the thought of being mistaken for a Nazi, but then again, I didn't want the commandant to think ill of me."

As a squadron of geese parades through Heinz's sleeping quarters, he suddenly warns me to stop taking notes. "If you are caught with these notes, you will be tortured! You must be careful! We must all be careful. A nun was tortured here recently. Her head was ducked in a bucket of *scheisse* [excrement]."

I ask Heinz why he stays in Nueva Germania. Drifting in and out of coherency, Heinz rambles in German and broken Spanish about how he moved to Paraguay fifteen years ago because he wanted to retire on his own piece of land. Now that he is dying, what is the point of leaving? His shotgun is always loaded near his bed. He is ready if the enemy comes.


THY ROD AND THY STAFF

Congressional Record

United States of America

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 97th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 128 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1982 No. 40

House of Representatives

Senate

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1982

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. on the expiration of the recess and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Richard C. Halverson, LL.D., D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

This Word reminds us, O Lord, that there is no authority but of God, the authorities that be are ordained of God and that none in authority are God's servants for good. I pray for those Senators who face opposition in the fall. Give them special wisdom as they plan their campaigns. Raise up

THE Guaraní Indians of Paraguay weave stories of their gods and the spirits that stalk the night: Mobói lorito, Moñái, Carupí, Malavisión, and Pombero—the spirit who impregnates beautiful young white women in order to create a new, strong race between the Indians and the blond "gods of the sun,"—which is how the Indians used to describe European settlers. Journalists, anthropologists, and politicians create their own tales about Paraguay. Land of Mengele and Bormann. Land of genocide against the Guaraní and Guayaki. Land of international cocaine and heroin smuggling. Dark rumors abound, the most recent that President Stroessner has planned a "City of the Presidents" for overthrown tyrants like Idi Amin Dada and former emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa. (No doubt that rumor arose when Nicaragua's fallen *caudillo* Anastasio Somoza Debayle was granted asylum, only to be blown up by a bazooka near his Asunción mansion in September 1980.)

Just where the rumors cease to be rumors is the question. There are very few answers to be discovered, only the understanding that, with money, you can do anything you want in Paraguay.

An immigrant arriving in Paraguay need not leave his national identity behind. Unlike in Brazil, Paraguay's gargantuan neighbor, in Paraguay there is no assimilation process for foreign-born nationals. Although he may learn to enjoy *maté* and *parillada* (barbecued meats), an expatriate can retain the unique customs of his birthplace. For what is Paraguayan in origin has been traditionally eschewed for what is foreign.

Satellites of foreign communities dot the Paraguayan landscape: over thirty nationalities or ethnic groups, Ukrainians, Mennonites, White Russians, Croatians, Brazilians, Argentinians, Chinese, and, more recently, Japanese and Koreans. But it is the Germans who are by far the most powerful and one of the oldest groups of foreign-born settlers in Paraguay.

Perhaps more than any other group of settlers, the Germans have held on fanatically to their cultural identity. Until recently they maintained separate schools (Nueva Germania had one until the late 1940s), churches, and cultural societies. Many have retained their German citizenship. Dialects that are barely spoken anymore in Germany are commonplace in Paraguay.

Even before Adolf Hitler became Germany's chancellor in 1933, most of Paraguay's German nationals were diehard National Socialists. According to Michael Grow's excellent historical work *The Good Neighbor Policy and Authoritarianism in Paraguay*, the first Latin American branch of the Nazi party was founded in Paraguay in 1931. Throughout the Thirties, swastikas and portraits of Der Führer were prominently displayed in German schools and business establishments throughout the country. By the end of the decade, the German community, which totaled 26,000 in a total population of less than one million, was successfully infiltrated, and willingly dominated, by Nazi agents from the Third Reich.

After the United States entered World War II, the Roosevelt administration's Good Neighbor Policy forced Paraguay to withdraw support for the Axis, even though the Paraguayan officer corps was unabashedly pro-Hitler. But the president, Higinio Morínigo, shrewdly calculated that given the inevitable British and American naval supremacy in the Atlantic, German financial aid, which had been considerable, was bound to dry up.

In return for promises of substantial American aid, President Morínigo pledged solidarity with the Allied cause. Paraguay's foreign minister, Luis María Argaña, said: "The Axis powers know full well what Paraguay's real sentiments are and will take that into consideration when they finally triumph. But in the meanwhile it is imperative that Paraguay play along with the United States for urgent reasons of national self-interest."

Paraguay did not formally declare war on the Axis until February 1945, two months before Germany capitulated. Even then, Paraguay's Nazi party was not deactivated until a year after the war ended. While Paraguay offered the United States gestures of goodwill—the furniture at the German embassy was confiscated by the Foreign Ministry, where it is still in use today—Nazi agents continued to operate freely around the country.

After the war, many Nazis found a safe route out of Germany via false papers from the Vatican. Those who succeeded in escaping usually departed from the Italian port of Genoa for Argentina, where President Juan Perón had established a firm policy of welcome for Nazi war criminals. After the fall of Perón in 1955, Paraguay became the new sanctuary for Nazi and Fascist fugitives, including such notables as Heinrich Müller, former head of the Gestapo, and Ante Pavelic, whom Hitler appointed *poglavnik*, or "leader," of Croatia during the war and who, while responsible for the deaths of 800,000 of his countrymen, was purportedly hired by the Stroessner government in 1958 to organize a secret informer network for the police. According to legend, the deputy Führer, Martin Bormann, another phantom hero of Paraguay's German communities, has also found a safe haven in Paraguay.

"Nowadays," states a leading Paraguayan diplomat to the United States, "things are different. Paraguay has changed in the last fifteen years. We have Itaipu [the $7 billion hydroelectric dam on the Paraná River, whose potential 12.6 million kilowatt output makes it the largest in the world]. Our telecommunications system is up-to-date and satellites bring us television from all over the world." Under President Alfredo Stroessner, Paraguay has steadily advanced into the modern age. According to the Paraguayan diplomat, "President Stroessner is not a dictator, he is an autocrat."

Stroessner, who seized control of Paraguay on May 4, 1954, is, with Enver Hoxha of Albania and Kim Il Sung of North Korea, one of the longest-reigning rulers in the world today. He has governed Paraguay longer than any other head of state since independence, and has indeed brought a considerable degree of stability to the country. Stroessner's twenty-eight-year reign is particularly impressive in the context of the forty-seven presidents who have taken office since Paraguay received its independence from Spain in 1811 (an average of one every twenty-three months). Out of the forty-seven, twenty-four were forced out of office by violence or the threat of violence. Sixteen presidents served for less than a year, and five of them for less than a month.

Relations between Paraguay and the United States have always been somewhat formal. A Paraguayan delegate to the United Nations complained to me, "President Stroessner is unfairly represented in your country. He doesn't protect any war criminals. Your press is trying to create a conspiracy theory about Nazis in Paraguay. There are people saying that there are Nazis in

South America trying to create a fourth Reich. Mengele, Mengele, all you hear about Paraguay is Mengele. All this talk about Nazis in Paraguay is pure fantasy."

In the fertile farmland of southeastern Paraguay, about an hour's drive from Encarnación, Paraguay's second largest city, are several predominantly German agricultural communities. The majority of the earliest German immigrants settled here, founding towns called Hohenau, Obligado, Capitán Miranda, and Bella Vista.

No faded lithographs of Dr. Förster hang on the walls. Cows wander the verdant countryside. The towns, with their supermarkets and paved streets, look like small rural communities in present-day Germany or Austria. On the surface, these German communities have none of the idiosyncrasies of Nueva Germania; their inhabitants are typical farmers, solid and hard-working. But below the tranquil surface is more of Dr. Bernhard Förster's legacy.

Bowling night in Bella Vista is a weekly ritual. The wives stay home and the males of all ages, dressed in overalls and clean work clothes, gather at the local clubhouse for several games and rowdy conversation. The event seems harmless and pleasurable, yet a visitor who arrives with a smoked pork loin as an offering is greeted with suspicion.

After a few beers, the atmosphere lightens. The newcomer is welcomed into the bowling match—an old-fashioned game with a ball that has two holes instead of three. This is not a deluxe American bowling alley in a shopping center. There are two splintered wooden alleys and two eight-year-old Guaraní boys who reset the pins by hand.

After the twenty or so farmers are deep in their brew, "*Heil, Hitler*" rings through the clubhouse. The conversation settles into the familiar weekly pattern. "Ah, if only the Führer were alive today . . ." "All this Holocaust business is propaganda of the Jews. Only a few thousand were killed." (This insight is offered by a nineteen-year-old Austrian.) "Yes, yes, Mengele used to bowl with us."

When the final game is over, the young Guaraní pin-setters clean up the mess while the Aryans retire to the cramped back room for jokes and reminiscences. Afterward, the visitor is invited to a farmhouse to drink homemade schnapps, and as he munches on Westphalian-style smoked bacon, the host, most of whose teeth have rotted away, tearfully plays the "Horst Wessel" song on his accordion.

A night to remember, and the strangest thing about it is that the host, like many of his comrades, has never been to Germany. It would shock him to see how Europe has changed since the end of the war. In Nueva Germania, a seventy-year-old German merchant who also had never been to Germany introduced himself by saying, "*Ich bin aus dem Grossdeutschen Reich*" ("I am from the Greater German Reich")—a term out of vogue since the fall of Hitler. But in the German communities of Paraguay, the past is not forgotten . . . it is frozen in the year 1933. □



Steve Wilcox

THE BOX REBELLION

by Donald E. Westlake

There'll be trouble if the good citizens of Belize don't get television—and soon.

Most Sundays, Emory King has a group of friends over to his spacious home, in suburban Tropical Park outside Belize City, for a barbecue and a viewing of whatever is the major sports event on television that day, ranging from the Superbowl to Wimbledon. The only odd thing about this is that there isn't any television in Belize. (Well, there is one sporadic, unsatisfactory illegal broadcaster, but he doesn't quite count.)

The Belize government retains the right to license television broadcasting within the country, but so far it hasn't decided what to do with that right, there being differences of opinion as to whether to follow the British government-owned BBC

Donald E. Westlake is a novelist whose most recent book, Kahawa, *was published by Viking in the spring.*

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model or the U.S. free-enterprise model. The only action so far has been a promise to the citizenry of this tiny Central American republic —154,000 people in an area roughly the size and shape of New Jersey —that there will definitely be some sort of TV in Belize by 1984.

That has never been good enough for the people who could afford to do something about it. A few hopeful souls have put up immensely tall antennas in hopes of snagging Mexican or Guatemalan or Cuban TV, but most of the owners of the 3,000 television sets in Belize have leapfrogged an entire technology, going from radio directly to videocassettes.

These cassettes are usually flown in from Miami, but in December 1980, American-born, naturalized Belizean entrepreneur Emory King spent a considerable sum on his own twenty-foot-diameter earth station, capable of receiving signals from virtually all the satellites now circling the globe. He could pick up all the American networks, an unscrambled Home Box Office, all the cable feeds, everything.



Throughout 1981, King offered his customers rental cassettes of programs the morning after they were originally broadcast. His big items were the British royal wedding (thirty copies, with a long waiting list) and the films *The Blue Lagoon* and *Kramer vs. Kramer* (twenty-four steadily circulating copies of each). In a commingling of ancient and modern techniques, King's earth station is on three wheeled feet; it is shoved this way and that to aim at particular satellites.

When he began this operation, King wrote the satellite companies in the United States, explaining what he was doing and asking what royalties or fees he should pay, but, he says with remembered wonder, "They all said the same thing. They're licensed for domestic broadcasting only, so they can't charge anybody outside the States. Something to do with international treaties."

More recently, following some programmers' complaints, the FCC has decided broadcasters *should* collect from commercial users outside the United States, so apparently the practices are changing. In any case, Belize, one of the smallest of nations and certainly the newest—it became independent last September —seems to be finding itself at the cutting edge of both video technology and international law.

THE actual TV broadcasting station in Belize City is operated by a prominent local boatbuilder named Arthur Hoare. Hoare set up his own earth station last summer and then offered his fellow citizens a special box and antenna that would allow them, in the comfort of their own homes, to attend upon his earth-station reception, for which he charged them $1,900 each, plus a monthly fee. Twenty-four citizens decided it was worth it, even though they received only one channel instead of the promised three and Mr. Hoare offered no program listings.

Then another citizen, a TV repairman named David Jenkins, discovered an adjustment that could be made inside a TV set, allowing it to pick up Mr. Hoare's programming without the need for the box and the antenna; for considerably less than $1,900 nearly 1,000 citizens took the Jenkins adjustment and considered themselves well ahead.

But maybe they weren't. Hoare's twenty-four subscribers were a drop in the bucket, even in a nation of 154,000, but David Jenkins's masses huddled around their TV sets in a land where television broadcasting is illegal were impossible to overlook, especially after an interview with Hoare ran in the December issue of *Brukdown*, a slick local magazine something like a cross between *Time* and *New York* on a very, very small scale.

In the interview, Hoare offered some ingenious defenses and evasions; for instance, that his eighty-foot antenna was not designed for broadcasting but merely to "amplify" the signals received from the earth station squatting beside it. (Together, they're faintly reminiscent of the 1939 World's Fair symbol of trilon and perisphere.) But all this publicity, and the number of people involved, finally made it impossible for the government to ignore the fact that Mr. Hoare's "amplifying" was the same as most people's "broadcasting." In January, less than a week before the Superbowl, he was shut down by order of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Hoare customers *and* the Jenkins customers together promptly raised such a howl that the Ministry of Communications now told Hoare he could open up again. When he did, he tried moving to a different frequency, away from the Jenkins freeloaders, but when that caused interference with airplane communications, he returned to the original frequency. As it now stands, whether he is operating or not at any given moment depends on which ministry talked to him last, but he at least seems to be running frequently enough to please the citizenry.

On the other hand, the money and ingenuity being spent in Belize for actual television suggests that 1984 may be too leisurely a schedule for the government to maintain. Without some more immediate change, Belize might well be the first country in history to have a television riot. And without even a six o'clock news program to show it on.

An unusual demonstration of the relation between television and a government's dealings with its governed came at the onset of the Falk-

land Islands crisis when the Argentines, immediately on taking military control, began to ship in television sets for the populace. It became clear that if the islanders were to switch their allegiance from Britain to the South Americans, their reward would be the viewing of the 1982 World Cup—in color. Whether or not any islander was actually prepared to trade his allegiance for a life of instant replays was a question that soon became moot, but the power of television to affect events—merely by its existence, apart from whatever it might say or show—was tacitly acknowledged.

MORE THAN governmental manipulation of television links Belize with the Falklands. They are two of the four British or formerly British territories that are claimed by Spain or former Spanish colonies (the others being Guyana, two thirds of which is claimed by Venezuela, and Gibraltar, all of which is insisted on by Spain). In Belize's case, the claims are multiple and contradictory, Mexico claiming the northern third of the country, Honduras some of its offshore islands, and Guatemala the whole country. The Mexican and Honduran issues are quiescent, but Guatemala's interest is very much alive and is the reason why 1,700 British troops remain stationed in Belize nearly a year after formal independence.

The most recent actual riots in Belize were not about television at all, but about that very independence. They happened in April 1981, five months before Britain's scheduled transfer of sovereignty, and, depending upon the viewpoint of the participants, they occurred because independence was coming (a) too early, (b) too late, (c) under the wrong circumstances, or (d) at all. But the one fact on which all participants could agree was that the primary villain in the piece remained, as ever, Guatemala.

Guatemala's claim to Belize is even murkier than Argentina's to the Falklands, being based on a convoluted kind of Spanish Succession that almost nobody really understands but everybody involved is prepared to discuss at length. Belize's independence from a United Kingdom eager to rid itself of its remaining loss-leader colonies had been delayed since at least 1970 simply because Guatemala kept massing troops on the border in expectation of the British departure.

In the last few years, Belizean representatives have been allowed to join the British team in the sporadic negotiations with Guatemala, and finally, in March 1981, the talks produced a document called the Heads of Agreement, which listed sixteen areas in which the parties had agreed on a basis for discussion.

Belize's prime minister, George Price, whose People's United Party is known as the PUP, had been Belize's chief negotiator, so the several opposition parties had a field day. The word "sellout" was frequently heard. Price was darkly suggested to be in league with the Guatemalan generals, and the most radical right political group, the Belize Action Movement (continuing Belize's penchant for appropriate acronyms), went so far as to advocate in public the assassination of Prime Minister Price, through the slogan "Kill the man and save the land."

The result of all this tension, three weeks after the promulgation of the Heads of Agreement, was a population sufficiently in panic to riot, which it did, causing a few deaths and a lot of bloody noses and property damage. The British army, in place to keep the Guatemalans away, was forced to take to the streets to restore civil order.

Belizeans don't normally riot (or commit assassinations), and it may be they embarrassed themselves that April. For whatever reason, the debate has remained intense but much less inflammatory since then, while quiet negotiation continued between the governments of Belize and Guatemala.

At least it did until this spring, when, following one too many blatantly rigged national elections, Guatemala underwent a serial coup,

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beginning in the morning with a group of younger army officers pledged to new elections and at least a start on social reform, who were themselves usurped, before noon, by the extreme-right-wing politician Lionel Sisniega Otero (whose MLN party has always pressed the Belize claim most vociferously), who by midafternoon had been supplanted by General Efraín Ríos Montt. Although Ríos Montt was considered a moderate when he ran unsuccessfully for president in 1974, his first action as leader of the third junta that day was to suspend the constitution, ban politics, and indefinitely postpone new elections. Since his second action was to deliver a somewhat shrill sermon on his fundamentalist religious beliefs, uncertainty now reigns among nations doing business with Guatemala.

The only certainty in all this for the Belizeans is that Argentina's attack on the Falklands invigorated Guatemala's own hopes. A large billboard on the Guatemalan side of the border, along the one road connecting the countries, reads BELICE ES GUATEMALA. Until the coups of March, it had seemed possible that the sign would soon be coming down; now no one knows what will happen.

In the meantime, life goes on. Independence did come to Belize, on September 21, 1981, but the emotional aftermath, ranging from exhilaration to panic, has subsided, and perhaps the most poignant example of the return to reality was described in the *Belize City Reporter*, under the headline MCKOY FAILS IN DIVORCE BID. In a story that suggests that Central American civil servants may be warmer blooded than our own, the minister of labor was reported to be suing his wife for divorce, naming the head of the Department of Reconstruction and Development as "the disruptive influence in his marriage." As the *Reporter* put it, "Refusal . . . hinged on a point of law which holds that a husband estranged from his wife reinstates her as his spouse by cohabiting with her. The evidence which the court accepted indicated that the minister had sexual relations with his wife on September 21, the day Belize became independent."

Belize City is no longer the national capital. A quaint-looking jumble of clapboard structures on stilts sprawling along both sides of Haulover Creek's entrance to the Caribbean Sea, the city has the disadvantage of being a mere six inches above sea level. When Hurricane Hattie leveled the place in 1961—the second flattening in thirty years—it seemed time to build a new and safer capital. A spot was chosen twenty-five miles inland (fifty-one by the messy road) and nearly a hundred feet higher than that dangerous sea. The place was named Belmopan, in honor of ancient Mayan residents of the area.

By 1970, initial construction was finished, and the government moved in, with a certain fanfare and an opening-day population of 2,500. A metropolis of 30,000 inhabitants by 1990 was intended, but right now even the most optimistic head-counter cannot find more than 4,000 Belmopanians within the bleak precincts of the capital. (The architects combined Mayan motifs with modern concrete to come up with something that looks like a junior-college campus surrounded by an army camp's dependent-housing area. A combination of the jungle's inexorable growth and the nation's cash shortage has meant less than perfect maintenance; the small cluster of cracked and weedy government buildings already look embarrassingly more like an ancient Mayan ruin than the architects and politicians could have intended.) So while Belize City remains the social and commercial center of the country, Belmopan is merely the capital; has become, in truth, a sort of model railroad Brasilia.

"If the world had ends," Aldous Huxley wrote in *Beyond the Mexique Bay*, Belize "would be one of them. It is not on the way to anywhere or from anywhere." But of course the world does not have ends, as was demonstrated once more when Francis Ford Coppola dropped in last November with his son Giancarlo, his longtime production designer Dean Tavoularis, and other members of his staff. It was not a vacation; as *Daily Variety* bannerheadlined on the first page of its December 11 issue, COPPOLA MULLS BELIZE FACILITY. "I believe sooner or later," the director and producer was quoted, "someone's going to build the studio of the future and, because of the nature of such a studio, because of the electronic aspect, it could be anywhere. . . . the advantages of Belize are that it's the only English-language-speaking country in Central or South America, it's only five hours away, or an hour-and-a-half from Miami or New Orleans, it could be a communications center, its position on the Caribbean makes it an incomparable tourist attraction, and it's a young country that hasn't been touched. There's nothing to be undone."

In January Coppola returned for a few more days, and more recently he said, "I'd love to make a movie in Belize. The best way to get to know a country is to make a movie there."

Most Belizeans take the whole thing with a grain of salt—Americans with big ideas have been seen before. A Johnny Weismuller Tarzan picture was filmed in Belize in the early Thirties, and every once in a while since then a lot of people bearing cameras and microphone booms and clipboards and harried expressions have waded ashore to "discover" the place yet again.

Most recently it was *The Dogs of War*, in which Belize played the role of the mythical African nation of Zangara. The old insane asylum in Belize City had just recently been emptied in favor of a more modern facility outside town, so the moviemakers, with local help led by the redoubtable earth station operator Emory King, redressed the place as the presidential compound in Zangara's capital city, and then, while the cameras rolled, blew the thing to pieces with a lot of well-placed dynamite. Take an insane asylum, convert it to a dictator's palace, blow it up; there's something very Belizean about that. □



FACT SHORTAGE NO PROBLEM, ANALYSTS SAY

by Alexander Cockburn

It's much more fun covering a war you can't get to.

UNTIL the Falklands crisis hove over the horizon at the start of April there had not been a really enjoyable war for quite some time. Indeed, things were going so well by the end of the first five weeks that press analysts were hailing it as a virtually unique example of "integrated war reporting" in which sturdy, old-fashioned war technology and tested journalistic techniques had combined to produce what one analyst described as "extraordinarily satisfactory results."

Until the Argentinian invasion of April 2, purists had treasured the Italian adventure in Abyssinia during the 1930s as the last conflict to afford ideal battle conditions for the copy desk. These purists have been quick to point out that Evelyn Waugh's account of the coverage of that campaign in *Scoop* remains the classic account of war reporting. Since then, there have been just wars, and even unjust ones, but all of them fell short of the journalistic ideal: too contentious (Vietnam); too genocidal (Biafra); too quick (the Six Day War); too slow (Iraq versus Iran). There was a brief moment when the Ituri forest pygmies' defense of Shaba province looked promising, but in the end even these diminutive practitioners of the martial arts let us down, "melting back into the forest" with their famous nets.

The favorable circumstances of the Falklands affair were obvious from the start: islands about which nothing was known, invaded with legal justifications no one could understand, and defended with an ardor no one could fathom. The fact that the only material interests affected were those of 1,800 sheep farmers was a further advantage, since it diminished the chances of excessive editorial sententiousness about "the fate of millions" or "the future of the West"—always discommoding to enjoyable war reporting.

In the early days of April, while military experts were hastening home to fetch their maps, editorial writers sent up flares to illuminate the battlefield, along with "smoke" to baffle enemy readers. Analysts, preferring to speak off the record, point to a *Baltimore Sun* editorial of April 10 as a particularly fine example of a journalistic technique known as "proleptic ambiguity," sometimes jocularly referred to by reporters on the ground as "thumb-sucking":

> *The confrontation between Britain and Argentina harks back to another age, another era, so much so that the world watches with a thrill of nostalgia. For once humankind can put aside the horror of a thermonuclear ballistic missile streaking to its target in fourteen minutes or so to contemplate the movement of a surface fleet over a period of fourteen days. Does it prove the obsolescence or the enduring use of a navy? Does it produce an international time warp . . .?*

A more muscular example of proleptic ambiguity was to be found in the London *Times*, whose editorialist had already covered himself with glory in the first seconds of the conflict by proclaiming that "We Are All Falklanders Now" and by quoting John Donne to the effect that "No man is an island." This last tag is usually reserved for comment

Alexander Cockburn writes columns for the Village Voice *and the* Wall Street Journal.

David Ensor

about the future of the United Nations; connoisseurs were ecstatic about its daring use in this new context.

Following through on April 5, the *Times* man noted that "If diplomatic efforts fail, in a few weeks' time the Task Force will be in the right area. How it goes about securing the eviction or evacuation of the invading forces will be the subject of urgent technical study. It can be done; it will be done."

AMID the flares and smoke of the editorialists, forward platoons of commentators were already peppering enemy forces with small-arms fire. In a lone mission of great gallantry, Anthony Lewis fiercely engaged with the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Jeane Kirkpatrick, charging her with shameful behavior in dining at the Argentinian embassy in Washington on the very night of the invasion. A few days later he was accusing her of justifying, by analogy, Hitler's occupation of the Sudetenland. Some commentators perceived this last attack as a "clear breach" of internationally recognized rules of war. Others noted that there had been a long history of tribal hostility between Lewis and Kirkpatrick, and in such affairs "anything goes."



In the pundit platoons, veterans were plunging and rearing amid the scent of battle. Henry Fairlie concluded one dispatch to the London *Times* from Washington with these words: "And may I also be allowed to speak for the British here: 'Your Majesty, your loyal subjects here are ready, a small contingent but with our rusted swords, last used at Marston Moor in defence of the Crown, already taken from the wall.'" It remains obscure as to why Fairlie's sword had last been used in 1644, and why indeed he had failed to maintain it in proper condition, but analysts stressed that in such journalistic military missions "tone is everything."

Amid such light skirmishing, heavy forces were taking up position. Drew Middleton, military correspondent of *The New York Times*, had set sail for London to take personal command of the fighting. Even in the first week Middleton, ever the seasoned campaigner, had not been idle, airlifting whole batteries of a weapon originally produced by the British but now manufactured in the United States, known in the trade as "wider considerations": "American planners," Middleton wrote on April 7, "would watch any landing by airborne troops and commandoes with interest. One pointed out that the 8,000 miles that separate Britain from the Falklands is only a little more than the distance from the East Coast of the United States to the Persian Gulf."

By the end of the first week it was obvious to analysts that the Falklands campaign had reached a stage of crisis, confronted by a powerful and resourceful foe, in the form of "peace talks." Nothing is so fatal to reader interest in a good war as the threat of peace, and this time it came at an awkward juncture. With the British fleet still weeks from its objective and the Falkland kelpers themselves cut off from inspection, communication lines to reader interest were already dangerously extended.

Forward-based press battalions in Argentina were doing their best, notably in some light but diverting engagements with the British community in Buenos Aires. On April 14, a reporter for the Knight News Service had a particularly satisfactory sortie, in the form of an interview with Archie Norman, a publisher resident in Argentina for twenty-five years: "I have no sympathy at all for the British position," Norman said, "and I have no sympathy for the Falkland Islanders because they are a squalid lot. And I have no sympathy for the Falkland Islands Company which has kept them that way. The whole thing is absolutely disgraceful." Norman proved his worth again and again in the days that followed, refining his diction with each visit from a reporter. By April 26 he was telling Michael Burns of the *Baltimore Sun* that the kelpers were "ignorant brutes who take all the benefits from Argentina, and think British civilisation is listening to the BBC on the shortwave radio. . . . Argentina has done more for them than Britain has in 150 years."

Additional efforts to relieve pressure on those communication links to reader attention included recourse to costly, hard-target weapons known as "facts"—destructive devices almost never used in wartime and, in fact, outlawed by the newspapers of most civilized nations. Emergency deployment of these "facts" disclosed, for example in *Newsweek*, that the Falkland Islands Company had been maintaining the kelpers in conditions of privation and penury for over a century, without benefit of newspapers or television; that the kelpers, so far from being cherished subjects of Great Britain, probably would have been excluded from residence in the United Kingdom under new immigration laws.

BUT despite deployment of facts, peace talks continued to pose an ominous threat as the British fleet ploughed through the Atlantic. One helpful factor, analysts noted, was that the negotiations took the form of a "shuttle" by the secretary of state, Alexander Haig. "Shuttling," as a strategy to keep readers awake, was

first tested intensively by Henry Kissinger as a solution to the tactical problem posed by the fact that the single word "Geneva," let alone the full phrase "Geneva Peace Talks," can have a terminal effect on reader interest.

Haig made an elementary blunder, in the view of many experts, by keeping the press corps off his plane as it flew between London, Buenos Aires, and Washington. "Henry would never have done that," said one, noting that a good, inflight background briefing is worth a front-page headline in newspapers the next day and at least two minutes of network news time.

Headlines in *The New York Times* in mid-April indicated the menace of the peace crisis: HAIG AND BRITONS HOLD 6-HOUR TALKS ON THE FALKLANDS (April 9); even worse was PRESIDENT TALKS WITH ARGENTINA; URGES RESTRAINT (April 16); there was a spasm of hope on April 18 with ARGENTINA GLOOMY ON ACCORD AS HAIG CONTINUES TALKS; but a further setback came on April 22 with BRITAIN DRAWS UP 3-STEP PEACE PLAN ON THE FALKLANDS.

The only silver lining analysts could detect in these grim days was the almost total blackout on discussions by the United Nations, after the first commendably brisk resolution condemning Argentinian aggression. "You have to go back to Dag Hammarskjöld to find a secretary general who understood the needs of the modern communications industry," one veteran complained, as he sketched years of "incompetence and drift": U Thant, Waldheim, and finally Pérez de Cuéllar. By the time Pérez de Cuéllar had entered the headlines with his "peace initiative," South Georgia had been recaptured, the *General Belgrano* sunk, the *Sheffield* disabled, and the mid-April peace doldrums left far behind.

The recapture of the island of South Georgia was a textbook case of "integrated reporting," completely giving the lie to modern journalistic theories emphasizing the importance of "on-the-spot coverage." All the events occurred in locations



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affording no access to network news satellites, and even the journalists aboard the H.M.S. *Invincible* were ignorant of the actual course of events. Yet readers were richly rewarded for their loyalty through the dog days of mid-April. The doughty performance of the "crack" or "elite" Special Boat Squadron; the disabling of the Argentinian submarine; and the final, old-fashioned courtesy of a dinner party given by the British commander for the leader of the captured Argentinian garrison all played their part in a rewarding journalistic mission, placing Grytviken in the pantheon containing names such as Rourke's Drift and Mafeking.

Pressing home the advantage, Rear Admiral John "Sandy" Woodward, commander of the task force, recaptured headlines the following day with his description of the recapture of South Georgia as "an appetizer" and "the run-up to the big match, which in my view should be a walkover."

One danger to satisfactory coverage of the Falklands affair had been the aroma of slightly excessive frivolity that clung to it throughout the early days. Drew Middleton scented this peril and laid down an effective counterbarrage, reporting the weakening of NATO forces by the enforced absence of two thirds of the British fleet from normal sentry duty against a surprise Russian invasion. As early as April 14, other reporters were dexterously playing the Russian card, with speculation that the Soviet Union was informing its Argentinian friends of the British task force's movements. In one particularly daring exercise, it was suggested that the crisis might enhance Soviet chances of menacing the crucial tanker routes curving around the Horn of Africa.

President Reagan assisted ably in disposal of the "frivolity" threat by swinging the United States behind Britain at the start of May, thus provoking a fire storm of comment about the catastrophe this move represented in terms of U.S. diplomacy in Latin America. Pundits had already captured useful ground here —scouted out by Anthony Lewis— with protracted salvoes about the shortsighted immorality of the Reagan administration in seeking to foster relations with the Argentinian junta in the first place.

The serious fighting that broke out at the start of May confirmed the status of the Falklands affair as an exemplary war. All played their parts ably in the bombing sorties: the hastily converted Vulcan, built at enormous expense in the 1950s as part of the nuclear deterrent, now whiskered and on the verge of retirement, but useful at last in bombing an airstrip and some sheds 11,000 miles from its original intended objective; the propagandists in both the British and Argentinian forces severally claiming and denying the success of the mission.

With the sinking of the Argentinian cruiser *General Belgrano* on May 3 came predictable commotion in the press battalions, with some faint hearts aghast at the loss of life and eager to run up the white flag. There were even some sinister mentions of the U.N. and a possible role for Pérez de Cuéllar. But such timidity was crushed by the sinking of H.M.S. *Sheffield* on May 4.

This misadventure to British forces led at once to a most satisfactory widening of the conflict. Not only did it reintroduce a respect for Argentinian fighting prowess, diminished after the recapture of South Georgia, but it allowed support troops, based in Washington and long chafing at their relative inactivity, to taste action.

By May 6, Richard Halloran in *The New York Times*, Michael Getler and George Wilson in the *Washington Post*, and a *Wall Street Journal* editorialist were either suggesting or denying that the disabling of the *Sheffield* by a French Exocet air-launched missile threw into question all U.S. naval procurement policies of the last twenty years. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialist staked out the high ground in the company of Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, claiming that large carrier forces (cost, $17 billion or so) were necessary to avert the menace of precision-guided missiles. In fierce hand-to-hand fighting, Halloran, Getler, et al. quoted sources claiming that the large U.S. carriers merely presented larger and more costly targets to modern missiles launched from the air or from submarines.

Only connoisseurs and specialists writing for technical publications recalled that exactly the same debate broke forth in 1967 when the Egyptians sank the Israeli destroyer *Eilat* with a Russian missile. Analysts predicted that the battle over the precise significance of the sinking of the *Sheffield* would continue far into the future, with mop-up operations being conducted in the pages of *International Security*, *Strategic Review*, and the *Proceedings of the U.S. Naval Institute*.

At this critical juncture, experience reaped its usual rewards. Drew Middleton, under the headline IN BRITAIN THE OLD FIGHTING MOOD IS AROUSED, moved among his troops with a steadying word here and a nod of encouragement there. "Whatever the politicians call it—armed hostility, self-defense, confrontation —the British know it is war. When men are killed, aircraft shot down and ships sunk, the national instinct tells them this is war and wars are fought to be won." Middleton's pace never faltered in his pep talk to readers perhaps distracted by the budget fight in Congress. Stroke by stroke he raised the Falklands conflict to the nobility and emotional tension of the darkest days of 1940, with a stirring finale well worth the portentous introduction to his dispatch reminding readers of his long martial career: *"Tonight the British, sitting by their television sets at home or listening to the radio news in suddenly quiet pubs, are far from complacent. They know that war involves losses. But losses and defeats are likely to stimulate their combativeness and unite the country. Victory they handle poorly, defeat well."*

Middleton's point about poor British handling of victory was well taken. A PUNCH UP YOUR JUNTA was the *Sunday People*'s headline

after the bombing of Port Stanley airfield. Those noting the lack of atrocity stories, an essential ingredient of integrated war reporting, were glad to find the *Daily Mail* of May 7 reprinting passages from V. S. Naipaul's *The Return of Eva Peron* under the heading THE UGLY FACE OF THE REAL ARGENTINA. "The act of straight sex," the *Mail* quoted Naipaul, "easily bought, is of no great moment to the [Argentinian] macho. His conquest of a woman is complete only when he has buggered her. . . . so diminished men, turning to machismo, diminish themselves further, replacing even sex by a parody."

This was total journalistic war, bloody and terrible. The Argentinians fought back bravely, with *Gente* magazine reprinting photographs left behind by the British marines captured in Port Stanley accompanied by thinly veiled suggestions that these marines had themselves been guilty of perverted sexual practices. But full counterattack only came a few days later, with the Argentinian allegation that the British had strafed lifeboats. Analysts, noting with pleasure the reemergence of this old weapon, deplored only that the waters were too far south to be "shark-infested."

Pausing for reflection in the breathing space afforded by a Pérez de Cuéllar peace initiative at the end of the first week in May, all analysts agreed that for years to come the first five weeks of conflict between Britain and Argentina would furnish a textbook example for journalistic training schools and staff colleges, not to mention Nieman seminars and Aspen folkmoots, of how war should be fought in the press. Stirring uneasily as he heard Pérez de Cuéllar announce "some progress" in negotiations, one veteran on the way to his daily briefing at the International Institute for Strategic Studies commended the enormous advantages of "old-fashioned" conventional war over its thermonuclear substitute. With nuclear weapons, he noted, "it would all be over in a matter of minutes, and then what would we have to write about?" □

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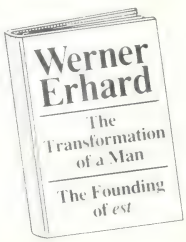
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TURN ON, TUNE IN, DROP DEAD

You haven't lived until you've died, say the apostles of drop-dead chic.

by Ron Rosenbaum

THE CURIOUS TALE of the Queen of Death and the lustful "entities" of Escondido is one of those little disturbances of man you may have missed if you haven't been tuned in to developments in the fast-growing "death awareness" movement. The scandal that developed over the erotic escapades of the "entities" represented a serious image crisis for the movement. Defenders of death awareness feel that the incident is merely an aberration being used unfairly by the medical establishment and its pawns in the press—servile minions of the "cure-oriented," "interventionist," "high-technology life-prolonging" old regime—to discredit the work of the dedicated devotees of death and dying. But a case can be made that intercourse with entities—okay, let's call it sex with the dead—is not an aberration but a summation, a consummation, of the whole misbegotten love affair with death that the movement has been promoting.

Ron Rosenbaum is writing a novel about cancer cures.

THE QUEEN OF DEATH, of course, is Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who reigns over a mountaintop "Death-and-Dying Center" in Escondido, California, whose work single-handedly created the death-and-dying movement, and who, until now, endowed it with respectability.

Author of *On Death and Dying*, *Living With Death and Dying*, *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying*, and *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, recipient of twenty honorary degrees, Kübler-Ross is now taught, in her estimation, in 125,000 death-and-dying courses in colleges, seminaries, medical schools, hospitals, and social-work institutions. She has come to be regarded as the last word on death. Not only do "death professionals"—hospital and hospice workers, clergymen, and psychiatrists—get their basic training from Kübler-Ross in order to counsel the dying, but her books are so widespread that most people who *die* these days are familiar with her "five stages of dying."

Die, succumb, expire, perish, depart, quit this world, make one's exit, pass on, pass away, depar

Kübler-Ross's thought has given birth to whole new academic industries—"thanatology" and "dolorology"—helped create the hospice movement, "Conscious Dying Centers," and, more recently, an increasingly cultlike exaltation, sentimentalization, and even worship of death.

In the past, like most sensible people, I've been content to leave strenuous thinking about death in the capable hands of others. Somehow I assumed from all the acclaim from varied quarters that Kübler-Ross couldn't be *too* foolish, assumed that she embodied the typical post-Enlightenment secular consensus on the subject: awareness of death giving an urgency and intensity to life, etc. Probably sensible, caring, and boring. But I have a feeling that the rest of you must have been averting your eyes from what Kübler-Ross was saying all this time, and that we're beginning to see the consequences. Because something's gone awry with the death-and-dying movement Kübler-Ross helped create. Things have gotten out of hand: Kübler-Ross herself has become the guru to a nationwide network of death 'n' dying centers called "Shanti Nilaya"; the "Conscious Dying movement" urges us to devote our life to death awareness and also opens up a "Dying Center"; a video artist kills herself on public television and calls it "artistic suicide"; the EXIT society publishes a handy, do-it-yourself Home Suicide guide that can take its place next to other recent Home Dying and Home Burial Guides; a pop science cult emerges around the "near death experience," which makes dying sound like a lovely acid trip (turn on, tune in, drop dead); attempts at two-way traffic with the afterlife abound, including a courier service to the dead using dying patients and even phone calls *from* the dead; belief in reincarnation resurfaces as "past lives therapy."

Is this multifaceted flirtation with death and suicide—you could call it the Pro-Death movement—some self-regulating, population-control mechanism surfacing as the baby-boom generation gets older, the better to thin its ranks before its numbers begin to strain nursing-home and terminal-ward facilities? And how did Kübler-Ross—saintly, respected, a *Ladies' Home Journal* "Woman of the Decade" for the 1970s—end up running a dating service for the dead in Escondido? Part of the problem may be heroin. Not Kübler-Ross's problem, but the problem in the very origins of her American death-and-dying movement. You see, Kübler-Ross and the American death-and-dying movement took their inspiration from the British "hospice" idea but neglected to import one crucial ingredient that made it work.

The hospice movement in Britain was a practical, no-nonsense alternative to the increasingly complex, painful, and isolating process of death in modern hospitals, where, in the hectic process of prolonging life with tubes and machines, patients aren't able to enjoy peace and quiet and the company of friends and relatives as they die. The British movement offered instead cozy, small "guest houses" for the terminally ill, with a sympathetic staff and medical treatment designed to ensure comfort, dignity, and alertness rather than an artificially prolonged life.

But your basic British hospice was able to offer its dying "guests" one thing American hospices could not, one thing that made these hospices more than merely pleasant places in which to expire without the aid of "high-technology life-prolonging intervention." The attraction of British hospices, the *sacrament*, in fact, that made them so popular, was the special painkilling mixture they dispensed, a potion described by some as the most powerful euphoriant experience available to the human senses: the "Brompton's Cocktail."

A combination of equal parts of pure heroin and pure cocaine, with a dash of chloroform in an alcohol-and-cherry-syrup base, Brompton's Cocktail became legendary for its ability to bliss out patients suffering from pain so intractable that no amount of mere morphine was able to subdue it.

Not surprisingly, dying hospice patients who were fortunate enough to receive the soothing sacrament were known to make all sorts of warm and endearing remarks when in its embrace; words of wisdom and spirituality and love that hospice professionals tended to attribute to the "caring and sharing" environment of their cozy death hotels, and to the visionary insights unique to the dying process, but which probably owed more to the elation and euphoria of the heroin-cocaine combo.

The problem was that while the "caring and sharing" ideas of the British movement could be imported, the drug laws in this country made it impossible to prescribe heroin for even the most terrorizing bone pain. In addition, the use of cocaine as a euphoriant is discouraged. So as a substitute for the real Brompton's Cocktail. American hospice doctors have concocted a bizarre and stunted version of that sacrament: a combination known as "Hospice Mix," which substitutes morphine for more potent heroin, and frequently uses thorazine—liquid lobotomy, as it's sometimes called by mental-health professionals—instead of cocaine.

For all their ostensible reverence for the wisdom of the dying and the integrity of the dying process, American hospices that use thorazine in their "mix" are treating dying patients as if they were psychotics. Unable to offer their dying clients the kind of truly effective and humane pain relief available to the British, American death professionals seem to have overcompensated for this failure by subjecting their dying clients—and afflicting us all—with massive injections of sentimentality, a syrupy overdose of sanctimony about the "beauty" of the dying process, about "learning from pain," to use

eet one's end, shuffle off this mortal coil, lose one's life, give up the ghost, stop breathing, breathe

some typical clichés, and about the wonderful wisdom that makes dying the "final stage of growth."

In doing so, the death-and-dying people have elevated the terminally ill into a new sort of oppressed class—oppressed by "inhuman, cure-oriented" doctors who don't recognize that dying is something to be *celebrated* for its intrinsic worth rather than feared and fought. Death professionals have begun attributing to the dying all the qualities of instinctual wisdom, primitive visionary insight, spontaneous vitality, and organic closeness to the ground of being with which oppressed classes are condescendingly endowed by their more privileged supporters.

"Many Native Americans died with great clarity," declares the co-director of a group called the "Dying Project," a statement that embodies perfectly the identification of the dying with a persecuted minority and, in its lofty condescension, is not far removed in spirit from "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."

WHILE THIS billing and cooing about death did not originate with Kübler-Ross—the cult of "the Beautiful Death" is a recurrent one in stagnant societies—she did come up with one concept that single-handedly revolutionized and *restructured* the worship of death in America and gave it an up-to-date "scientific" foundation: the five stages of dying.



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Stage 1: worship of the dying

Dividing dying into stages was a stroke of genius. Kübler-Ross brought forth her five stages at just about the time when people were dividing life into "passages," stages, predictable crises. Getting dying properly staged would bring every last second of existence under the reign of reason. As every student of elementary thanatology soon learns, the famous five stages of dying are: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance.

What's been lost in the general approbation of Kübler-Ross's five stages is the way her ordering of those stages implicitly serves a *behavior control* function for the busy American death professional. The movement from denial and anger to depression and acceptance is seen as a kind of spiritual *progress*, as if quiet acceptance is the most mature, the highest stage to strive for.

What Kübler-Ross calls bargaining, others might call a genuine search for reasons to live, to fight for life. But she has no patience with dilly-dallying by the dying. She disparages "bargaining" that goes on too long, describes patients who don't resign themselves to death after they've gotten the extra time they bargained for as "children" who don't "keep their promises" to die.

Yet by "acceptance," Kübler-Ross means the infantilization of the dying: "It is perhaps best compared with what Bettelheim describes about early infancy," she says. "A time of passivity, an age of primary narcissism in which . . . we are going back to the stage we started out with and the circle of life is closed."

Certainly this passivity makes for a quieter, more manageable hospice. Crotchety hospice guests who quixotically refuse to accept, who persist in anger or hope, will be looked on as recalcitrant, treated as retarded in their dying process, stuck in an "immature" early stage, and made to feel that it's high time they moved on to the less troublesome stages of depression and acceptance.

Now let's look at the practical effect of this premium on passivity on an actual encounter between a dying person and a "death professional." Let's look at a little hand-printed pamphlet entitled *It's Been a Delightful Dance*: the story of Ellen Clark as told in a sermon by Dr. Richard Turner.

This is an account of the therapeutic relationship between Turner and Clark, who was dying of cancer when she approached the Cancer Project of "Life Force," Turner's therapy organization, for counseling.

The California-based Life Force was one of several holistically oriented therapy groups that specialize in what has come to be called "cancering." Turner charged forty-five dollars an hour for such counseling.

I came across Turner and his group in 1980, in the Grand Ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, at a convention of the Cancer Con-

trol Society, a national organization that supports scores of "unorthodox" and forbidden cancer "cures"—everything from apricot kernels and coffee enemas to secret-formula serums and salves. I was somewhat puzzled to find someone like Turner speaking here, since the acceptance-oriented death-and-dying rhetoric in his speech contrasted with the feverish never-say-die, last-minute, miracle-seeking emphasis of the unorthodox-cancer-cure movement. "With certain patients I've counseled it becomes clear that at some level they are ready to die," Turner told me, when I questioned him after his talk. "They've made their choice, they feel they've lived their life. There was one patient of mine who'd done the holistic cures. But as I counseled her on her dying experience, it was as if this was what she wanted, it was as if she was releasing all her barriers and becoming fully human for the first time. She turned into a living, beautiful person so that by the time she died she'd done all her life's work in her last few weeks. Her name was Ellen Clark. In fact I wrote up my experience with her in a sermon I delivered. It's in our literature."

Reading Turner's description of the progress of his therapy with the late Ellen Clark, it's impossible not to notice the influence of Kübler-Ross in the way he idealizes the progressive infantilization of the dying.

The big breakthrough that Ellen Clark achieves as she's wasting away with cancer is, according to Turner's sermon, that she "develops a childlike transparency." How does Turner deal with this in his counseling session? He's eager to encourage it, eager to "reinforce those feelings that we were like children in kindergarten." His technique for reinforcing this? He responds completely only to Ellen's "childlike," "magical" looks; even when she's trying to tell him something in adult sentences he makes sure that "only part of my attention went back to what she was saying. . . . The result was that heavy subject matter such as life and death and problem-solving progressively lost its dominance and an air of lightness pervaded our meetings."

No wonder. Dealing with an adult who's been turned into a happily compliant dying child is much more fun for friends and family than facing the complexities presented by a stubborn adult who's frantically fighting to live.

As in other tales in the contemporary Beautiful Death literature, an element of parasitism seems to creep into the stories told by the selfless survivors. Turner tells us that after Ellen became the "transparent child," *he* really started getting off on the sessions. He reports feeling "light and alive" after each session. "I was gaining as much from our meetings as her." (Maybe he should have been paying *her* $45 an hour for the privilege.) Ellen's friends also "reported quite consistently being touched and healed in her presence." Touched and healed: the magical powers of the dying are frequent causes for amazement in the literature.

By turning herself into an agreeable, transparent, loving child with Turner's encouragement, by refusing crankily to seek out some new cure or make a desperate gamble for her life, Ellen made it easy for people to be around her and feel loving. The message for dying patients in that sermon is, to revise Dylan Thomas, "*Do* go gentle into that good night."

And then the climax of the *Delightful Dance* sermon: "The morning after I heard about Ellen's death I went out for my daily jog," Turner tells us. "A beautiful orange butterfly landed in front of my foot. I immediately felt *as if I knew this butterfly*, and apparently it had this same connection with me. . . . The butterfly and I were doing a get-acquainted dance. . . . I felt I was doing a get-acquainted dance with the butterfly within me. I feel I am ready to let go of being the caterpillar. . . . I am more ready to dance with my life. . . ."

And so, according to Turner, Ellen's pretty little death turned out to be a plus for everyone: Ellen got to be a butterfly and he got to dance during his daily jog. The whole thing sounded like a dance of death to me.

THIS IS ONLY the beginning, this reverence for the life-giving holiness of the compliantly childlike death object. It's a long way from there to going to bed with the dead, but the route is direct, and after reading the recent profusion of death-and-dying literature, I've divided it—in homage to Kübler-Ross—into five stages:

Stage 1: worship of the dying;
Stage 2: longing to *be* dying;
Stage 3: playing dead;
Stage 4: playing *with* the dead;
Stage 5: going to bed with the dead.

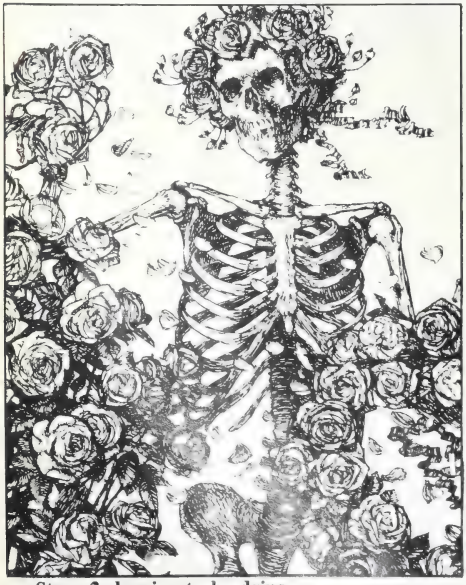
We've already seen Stage 1, with its reverence for the wisdom of the terminally ill. In Stage 2, death 'n' dying is seen to be an attractive option for healthy people. Why let the dying get all the benefits of facing death? To maximize the high of the dying experience when it comes, healthy people are urged by Stage 2 literature to devote their life to preparing for a beautiful death. Stage 2 advocates range from the Conscious Dying movement and its subsidiaries, the Dying Project and the Dying Center in New Mexico, to the "rational suicide" advocates. The London-based EXIT group is only one of several that put out practical do-it-yourself guides to painless suicide; other books tell you how to arrange the particulars of your death or burial at home. The late Jo Roman, evangelist of "creative suicide," went one step further—she did it on TV.

eck out, check in, cash in one's chips, turn up one's toes, slip one's cable, meet one's maker, go to

Stage 2 advocates tend to be the nags of the death-and-dying movement. Since we are not fortunate enough to be terminally ill, they tell us, we must make strenuous efforts to overcome our handicap by concentrating our lives on death and suicide.

It is never too early to start. "Should schoolchildren be asked to write essays on 'How I Would Feel if I Had to Die at Midnight' or compositions envisaging why and in what circumstances they propose to end their lives?" asks Mary Rose Barrington, past chairman of EXIT. "The answer may well be that they should," says Mary Rose, who, oddly enough, is also "Honorary Secretary of the Animal Rights Group." (Do they favor the right to suicide for parakeets?)

Missing out on early-childhood death education is no excuse to avoid the subject now. And that means today. Tomorrow may be too late if you believe the nagging of Steven Levine, director of the Dying Project. "Tomorrow," he points out, "could be the first day of thirty years of quadriplegia. What preparations have you made to open to an inner life so full that whatever happens can be used as a means of enriching your focus?" The first day of thirty years of quadriplegia. It's a particularly ironic formulation of the challenge because Levine and the Dying Project, and the Dying Center (where people check in to check out) are spiritual descendants of ex-Harvard professor and psychedelic pioneer Richard Alpert (now Ram Dass), and thus of a brand of spiritualism that expressed its incurable optimism with the slogan "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." Sure, but tomorrow the wheelchair and the catheter. Such a shift says something about this branch of the Pro-Death movement—either they've run out of good acid and have been dipping into the melancholy Hospice Mix, or, as they grow older, they're suddenly scared of death and afraid to admit it.



Granger Collection

Stage 2: longing to be dying

If you read Levine's testament, *Who Dies*, a bible for the Conscious Dying movement, you begin to suspect he's trying to smother his fear of death in protestations of his devotion to it. He's constantly hectoring the reader for having failed to do his death homework: "If you should die in extreme pain how will you have prepared to keep your mind soft and open?" he scolds. "What have you done to keep your mind present, so that you don't block precious opportunity with a concept, with some idea of what's happening, open to experience the suchness, the living truth, of the next unknown moment?"

You could dismiss this scolding as mere schoolteacherish sanctimony, or life-insurance-salesman scare tactics (buy my theory of dying now or you'll be condemned to die inauthentically), but there's something more frightened and frightening in this prose. I think it comes out in the Dying Project co-director's description of the ideal Conscious Dying movement-approved death:

> *I've been with people as they approached their death and seen how much clarity and open-heartedness it takes to stay soft with the distraction in the mind and body, to stay with the fear that arises uninvited, to keep so open that when fear comes up they can say, 'Yes, that's fear all right.' But the spaciousness from which they say it is not frightened. Because the separate 'I' is not the predominant experience, there's little for that fear to stick to. Clearly a useful practice would be to cultivate an openness to what is unpleasant, to acknowledge resistance and fear, to soften and open around it, to let it float free, to let it go. If you wrote down a list of your resistances and holdings, it would nearly be a sketch of your personality. If you identify with that personality as you are, you amplify the fear of death; the imagined loss of imagined individuality.*

This is metaphysical heroin, a Brompton's Cocktail of the mind, the same basic anodyne for the tears of things that all Eastern cults offer: if you detach yourself and experience all passion at one numb remove, in the context of the infinitude of being, nothing hurts as much. If you go the whole route and cease being a person—that "imagined individual" Levine disparages—then you won't even die because there won't be a you to die. You'll never be a person afraid of death because you won't be a person. You'll

be, instead, "the spaciousness" that is not frightened. Nonbeings can't cease being. If you make life as spacious and empty as death, you won't notice any transition between living and dying; you might as well be dead.

Which is exactly what the "creative suicide" people say. Or they might call it "CREATING ON MY OWN TERMS THE FINAL STROKE OF MY LIFE'S CANVAS," as video death artist Jo Roman wrote in her last letter to friends. ("By the time you read these lines I WILL HAVE GENTLY ENDED MY LIFE on the date of this letter's postmark," she announces with typical gentleness.)

Roman's trend-setting originality, of course, was not in her committing the act or justifying it on artistic grounds. It was in doing it so publicly. Suicide-proud self-murderers have in the past been content to have their feverish last thoughts and justifications publicized. But Jo Roman insisted on making a federal case of the act itself and the whole tearful "dying process," summoning friends and forcing them to grovel at the altar of her honesty while the videotape cameras rolled. She made the additional breakthrough of claiming for suicides the status of an oppressed *lifestyle* group in need of televised validation: "I want to share it with others in order to raise consciousness. Also, and importantly, because I am averse to demeaning myself by closeting an act which I believe deserves respect."

Of course, creative suicide is not the exclusive province of sick and exhibitionistic video artists. There were the healthy young teenagers in Seattle, a boy and a girl, who, inspired by the transcendent optimism about the indestructibility of the soul in *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, proceeded to get into a Pontiac and drive it at eighty miles per hour flat out into a stone wall, in order to ensure they spent eternity together.

SUICIDE and suicide pacts are a predictable enough consequence of the death 'n' dying movement. By romanticizing dying, by making death more "authentic" than life, suicide is made to seem an attractive, artistic, even heroic choice.

Another way of promoting the attractiveness and allure of death is through the creation of an inviting, reassuring, sugarcoated vision of the afterlife. Which brings us to Stage 3 in the development of contemporary death worship: the romance of the Near Death Experience (NDE), or playing dead.

At first the NDE seemed to be a freak, based on a few isolated reports. People who had been pronounced "clinically dead," people who "died" on the operating table, in the ambulance, or the intensive care ward, whose heart and vital functions ceased for ten, twenty minutes, would sometimes, after miraculous "resurrections," tell tales of leaving the body and traveling through a remarkable, otherworldly realm.

Aside from the *National Enquirer* ('DEAD MAN' SPEAKS!), no one paid much attention to these isolated reports until a philosophy professor named Raymond Moody compiled 150 of them into a book called *Life After Life*, which was published in 1975 with an endorsement by none other than Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who claimed that she had been doing exactly the same kind of research and that Moody's findings duplicated hers.

The "NDE" became the semi-official afterlife vision for the death-and-dying religion. It was appealing because it made death seem like something to look forward to. The "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns," whose mysteries had long terrified the human imagination, now seemed, from the reports of Raymond Moody's travelers, to be about as frightening as a day trip to the Jersey shore.

Let's look at Moody's "theoretically complete model" of the life-after-life experience, which I have here divided into seven easy-to-follow steps.

1. *A streetcar named death:* Our traveler hears himself pronounced dead. Next he hears "a loud ringing or buzzing and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long dark tunnel."

2. *The fly on the wall:* "He suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body. . . . He watches the resuscitation attempt from this unusual vantage point . . . in a state of emotional upheaval."

3. *Family reunion:* "He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died."

4. *The heavenly customs inspector:* He meets "a loving warm spirit of a kind he has never encountered before—a being of light. . . . This being asks him a question, nonverbally, to make him evaluate his life. . . ."

5. *The highlights film:* The "being of light" helps him along by "showing him a panoramic instantaneous playback of the major events of his life."

6. *Heaven can wait:* "He finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life. Yet, he finds that he must go back to the earth, that the time for his death has not yet come."

7. *Deportation:* "He is taken up with his experiences in the afterlife and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love, and peace. Despite his attitude," though, he's forced to rejoin the unpleasant world of the living.

Of course, it's possible that this pallid panorama of sweetness and light may actually *be* the afterlife and the ultimate riddle of existence has been solved. There are certainly millions of people who would like to believe its reassuring, nondenominational, downy-soft delights: Moody's book and his sequel *Reflections on Life After Life*, and its paperback rackmates *Life Before* and *Reliving Past Lives*,



The Most Astounding Car In The

The Probe III, an experimental Ford, drew some of the biggest crowds at the Frankfurt Auto Show. And it got great press. Germany's leading automotive publication, *Auto Motor und Sport*, called it "a dream car–slippery as a futuristic study in aerodynamics."

Aerodynamics is what the Probe III is all about. The airstream over the car does not symbolize the wave of the future, rather it shows how the Probe III looks in a wind tunnel.

It looks spectacular. A completely enclosed underbody, unique twin deck biplane rear spoiler (to maximize aerodynamic efficiency), sculptured door mirrors and flat wheel covers all contribut to Probe III's aerodynamic excellence.

Seat belts save lives–buckle up.



German Auto Show Was A Ford.

Compare it to most '82 European models and you get a glimpse of the near future. Drag coefficient is reduced by 0%, which conceivably could result in 27% rise in fuel efficiency at higher speeds.

But aerodynamics is not merely future concern of Ford Motor Company. It's a science in which we are assuming a leading role right now.

Our Ford Escort and Mercury Lynx, here in America, for example, have less wind resistance than the VW Rabbit, Mercedes Benz 300D and Audi 5000.

So the Ford Probe III is not a beginning, it's another move forward.

Ford

There's A Ford In America's Future.

go home feet first, join the majority, join the angels, die in the Lord, pass over Jordan, die in the last

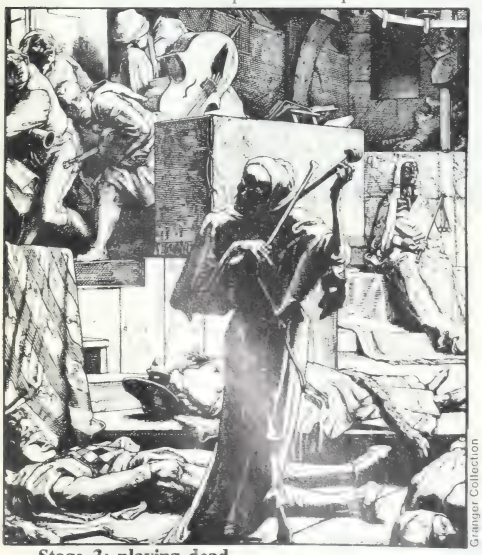
have all become big dime-store and drugstore best sellers, creating a popular NDE-based cult.

The only stumbling block that prevents the NDE from becoming the center of a new popular religion for the living has been that the actual ecstatic death trip experience seemed to be restricted to those privileged few whose heart, breathing, and vital functions had ceased for a certain period, or who were fortunate enough to be survivors of a plane crash, car wreck, or other near death trauma.

Enter the ever helpful Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who not only endorsed Moody's NDE but took the NDE cult a crucial step further by staking out that bright landscape and its loving beings of light for routine visits by the living—those among the living who learned the correct way of *playing dead*.

She discovered this pastime from her own travels in that realm of bright beings, she says. Her first "out-of-body experience" came at a time when she was, if not near death, at least by her account, dead tired from several years of exhausting nonstop travel, lectures, seminars, and workshops promoting death 'n' dying awareness. Drifting off into a trance-like sleep, she says, "I saw myself lifted out of my physical body. . . . it was as if a whole lot of loving beings were taking all the tired parts out of me, similar to car mechanics in a car repair shop. . . . I experienced a great sense of peace and serenity, a feeling of literally being taken care of, of having no worry in the world. I had also an incredible sense that once all the parts were replaced I would be as young and fresh and energetic as I had been prior to this rather exhausting, draining workshop. . . . Naturally I associated this immediately with the stories of dying patients who shared with me their near death experiences. . . . Little did we know then that that was the beginning of an enormous amount of new research, which ultimately led to the understanding of death and life after death."

While this first experience was involuntary, she discovered, after hooking up with some out-of-body occultists in Virginia, that she could learn to repeat it at will. She could play dead. Whenever her bodily vehicle needed a tune-up, whenever she wanted to set back the old odometer, rejuvenate the spark plugs, she could take a revitalizing dip into death, that refreshing fountain of youth.



Granger Collection

Stage 3: playing dead
Stage 4: playing with the dead

BUT KÜBLER-ROSS did not stop there. She sailed right on into Stage 4: playing with the dead.

Remember that benevolent "being of light" who greets you when you alight from the streetcar named death? Well, he has friends up there. Plenty of them. Spirit guides. Guardian angels. The enlightened "afterlife entities."

The way Kübler-Ross describes it now, all the while she was garnering her honorary degrees, her acclaim from clergy, shrinks, and academics for working with the dying, she was spending an ever increasing amount of her time playing with the dead. She made her own decisions only in consultation with her guardian angels and spirit guides. She counseled the living to make their decisions based on the guidance of entities from the Other Side.

In Stage 4, the implications of the previous stages become explicit: *death is much more wonderful than life*, the dead are much wiser, and, since two-way communication with the Other Side is now possible, it's better to consult with them about the tiresome business of getting through life. By Stage 4, the dead are not really "dead" at all. They're more alive than we, the living, can hope to be. They're not even called "dead" anymore. For Stage 4 death worshipers they are "afterlife entities"; by the time we reach Stage 4 there is no such thing as death.

This was another Kübler-Ross discovery, I learned from her "media person" in Escondido. "Elisabeth doesn't like the term 'near death experience,'" he explained to me, "because she doesn't believe that death exists."

Doesn't believe in death?

"No such thing," he said. "She believes there are just . . . transitions. So it's not a near death experience because it's available to normal living people every day if they tune in to it."

Turn on, tune in, drop dead. -

a man. out of the world, launched into eternity, gone to glory, sainted, in the grave, six feet under

Playing with the dead has become a rapidly expanding national pastime. Spirit guides and guardian angels are becoming for many adults the comforting imaginary playmates they had to abandon as children, the perfect loving parents they never had. This two-way traffic takes some curious forms. According to a *Washington Post* story (apparently not a hoax), a California company has hired a number of terminally ill patients who will, for a fee, act as couriers, memorizing messages to be delivered to the dead as soon as they arrive on the Other Side. A whole new category of spiritualist phenomena is chronicled in the book *Phone Calls from the Dead*, which cites reports that phones all over America are practically ringing off the hook as chatterbox "entities" from the Other Side pester their friends and relatives among the living. (These days they're probably jamming the switchboards to find out if they can get a date for the next Kübler-Ross "workshop.")

We're also witnessing a revival of the old-fashioned table-rapping spiritualist epidemic that swept America in the mid-nineteenth century. The modern version, which dispenses, for the most part, with tables and props, is known—appropriately enough for the TV age—as "channeling," and this narrowcasting from the Other Side is growing as fast as cable TV. And, like cable, it's a franchising operation. I discovered this when a woman announced to me on the phone that she'd "finally gotten her channel." It seems that she'd been a paid student of a medium who was a "channel" to an afterlife entity somehow related to "Seth," the extremely popular, extremely long-winded afterlife entity whose empty maunderings somehow mesmerize middle-class airheads with pronouncements such as: "For in the miraculous spontaneity of the sun there is discipline that utterly escapes you."

After paying the Seth-related medium for months of trance training, this woman had finally been granted an authorized, franchised "afterlife entity" of her own, which would speak through her when she went into a trance and which would allow *her* to charge others for the privilege of getting its utterances on their problems.

I witnessed one such channeling session in a SoHo loft, and a sad spectacle it was. The woman seemed to have been granted a channel with very poor reception, or else there was an exceptionally thick-headed entity in the control room on the Other Side. After ten minutes of "going into trance," complete with head rollings, eye rollings, and all the most clichéd eyelid-batting expressions of the stage spiritualist, the woman finally snapped to and began speaking in the voice of her "channel" (a voice barely distinguishable from her own). But the hapless entity couldn't answer a single question she posed. I'd never seen an entity hem and haw so haltingly and ignorantly. Apparently, the slick and accomplished spiritualist franchiser who sold this gullible woman her channel hadn't even bothered to polish the entity's act enough to make it a good investment for the franchisee. It's probably a common spiritualist scam, taking advantage of such blind devotion to the wisdom of the dead to dump defective entities on the market the way swindlers sold underwater swampland lots in the Florida land boom.

Considering this feverish eagerness to be in touch with entities one way or another, it's not surprising that some death 'n' dying cultists have carried worship of the dead to Stage 5: going to bed with the dead.

It seems as if there has always been a subtext of eroticism in the growth of the death 'n' dying movement. Take the story behind Kübler-Ross's first big break into the national awareness.

"She was doing her seminars with dying patients virtually unnoticed in Chicago," her media person told me over the phone. "But then *Life* magazine heard about her and was going to send someone to see if there was a story in her work. There was this elderly man dying who was going to be the subject of the seminar when *Life* was there, but the old man died the night before."

There followed a hasty search for an understudy dying patient, and what happened next was in the best Broadway tradition: "They found a beautiful young girl to replace the old man." She was twenty-four or twenty-six, the media person told me. "And then *Life* knew they had a story. A real heartthrobber." It was this dying-heartthrob story in *Life*, he said, that made Kübler-Ross a sudden national sensation and enshrined her as Queen of Death.

If the dying can be heartthrobs, if the afterlife entities can be warm and loving and intimate with the living, why would anyone hesitate to go to bed with the dead?

By the time the sexual scandal broke in 1980, Kübler-Ross seems to have been bewitched into buying every last spiritualist trick in the book. She had no less than four personal entities—she called them "Mario," "Anka," "Salem," and "Willie"—attending her. She now believed in reincarnation and claimed to have memories of being alive in the time of Jesus. Where once her seminars had helped the dying, their friends, and their relatives live with despair, she now offered them a grab bag of Big Rock Candy Mountain fantasies of "life after life" to escape from life. And, finally, she'd allied her personal organization with a local sect that called itself the Church of the Facet of Divinity, hailing its minister, faith healer, and medium Jay Barham as "the greatest healer in the world."

Although accounts differ as to who actually did what to whom, allegations of seductions by enti-

ushing up daisies, bought the farm, food for worms, carrion, smitten with death, stone cold, bite th

ties did not arise until the merger with Barham's church. According to one report "Barham regularly conducted seances in which he acted as a medium to communicate with what he called 'afterlife entities.' At many of these sessions, the former female members of the group asserted, they were instructed to enter a side room where they were joined a few minutes later in the dark by an unclothed man who talked convincingly of being an 'afterlife entity' [who] . . . then proceeded to convince the women that they should engage in sex with him. . . ."

According to another report, the seductive entity mispronounced certain words in a manner remarkably similar to that of Barham. Some of the women began to suspect that the aroused afterlife entity had earthbound limitations when five of them came down with the same vaginal infection after being closeted with him. And then there was the woman who actually turned on the light in the entity-visiting chamber and claimed to see Barham, naked except for a turban.

Barham had a wonderful explanation for his resemblance to the turbaned apparition. He denied engaging in sexual activities with any of the women but said that in order to materialize, certain entities might have *cloned themselves* from Barham's cells, which would explain how they might resemble him in materialized form.

Believe it or not, Kübler-Ross seems to have bought that too. For a year after the affair of the erotic entities, she defended Barham and continued to work with him, franchising death, dying, and entity-encounter sessions throughout the country. She now insists, however, that she was no fool, that nobody had pulled the wool over her eyes, that unbeknownst to everyone "I have been conducting my own first-person investigation of . . . Barham." This investigation, which she must have pursued with all the stealth of Richard Nixon's personal "investigation" of the Watergate cover-up, finally uncovered unspecified conduct by Barham that "did not meet the standards . . . of Shanti Nilaya."

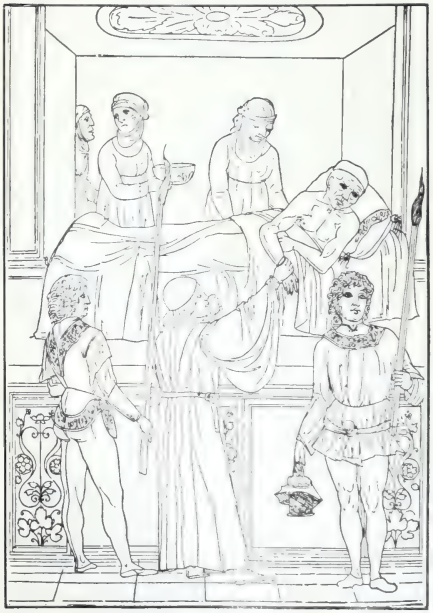
None of this substandard behavior, she insisted, took place on her premises or involved her workshops. The clincher in her investigation, Kübler-Ross told a writer, was her decision to have a doctor "measure" Barham's faith-healing power. This test, whose exact nature she did not disclose, revealed to her that his healing skills had declined measurably and that the decline was proof of his misuse of his powers.

"There are those who might say this has damaged my credibility," she conceded. "But it's not important whether people believe what I say. . . . I'm a doctor and a scientist, who simply reports what she sees, hears, and experiences."

Although Kübler-Ross has consistently stonewalled all inquiries about her reported presence at the scene of the assignations with the aroused afterlife entities, there is every indication that her disillusion with Barham has not diminished her swooning worship of death.

In a copyrighted interview with sympathetic questioner Joan Saunders Wixen, Kübler-Ross brushes off the Barham activities and instead boasts of some new benefits troubled people can look forward to as soon as they die. Death is a cure-all, the ultimate panacea: "People after death become complete again. The blind can see, the deaf can hear, cripples are no longer crippled after all their vital signs have ceased to exist."

If this encouragement to euthanasia as a quick solution to all physical imperfections were not so stupid and dangerous, it would be an occasion for regret: death has claimed another victim, the mind of Kübler-Ross. Another sad but predictable triumph of death over reason, another case of an interesting mind committing suicide. It begins to seem that thinking about death is, like heroin, not something human beings are capable of doing in small doses and then going about the business of life. It tends to take over all thought, and for death 'n' dying junkies, the line between a maintenance dose and an O.D. becomes increasingly fine. When Kübler-Ross finally makes her "transition," I'm certain all her nagging physical ailments will clear up, just as she says, but they'll have to mark her mind D.O.A. □



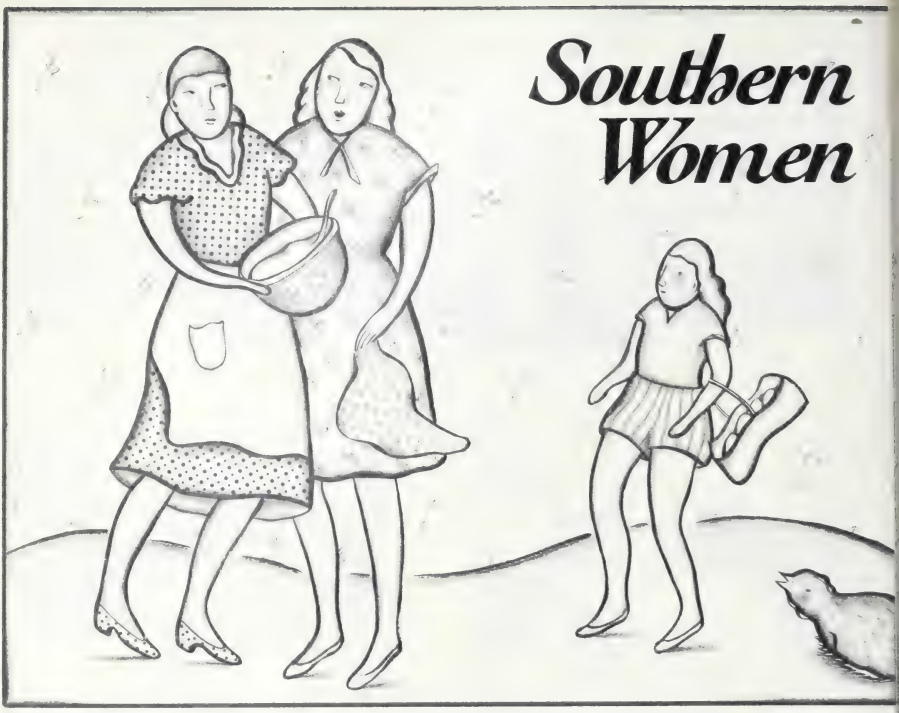
Granger Collection

Stage 5: going to bed with the dead

DESIGNS FOR LIVING

by Posy Simmonds





Southern Women

For generations they've known sisterhood is powerful.

by Shirley Abbott

LIKE ANY properly brought up Southern girl, I used to spend a lot of time in graveyards. On summer afternoons we'd pile into my mother's green Chevrolet—my Aunt Vera, her daughter June (four years my senior), and often also a massive, aged female relation. Somehow we'd fit ourselves into the front and back seats, the women in print dresses and hairnets and no stockings, we two kids in shorts, and Mother would gun on down the road at 40 mph with every window open.

The boredom, for my cousin June and me, was as heavy as passion. Our mothers never packed a picnic basket, or even a thermos of lemonade or any refreshments beyond a package of chewing gum, which they meted out late in the day, half a stick at a time. June was not only older than I but smarter, and we'd soon be brawling. She knew the drill: she'd tease me about my freckles or who I "liked" ("It's that little drip Charles Lynas, ain't it?"), and like some perplexed, furious puppy, I'd attack. Since my aggression made the most racket, I got the punishment.

"Pinch a piece out of her, Vera," my mother would command—"peench" was how she said it—her hands tight on the wheel and her eyes on the dust boiling in the road. Vera would turn and apply the thumbscrew with pleasure and efficiency. I'd weep, June would giggle. The women were contemptuous of my sorrows, their object being to keep us silent so they could talk. What they talked about, mostly, was birthdays. They'd name over all the kin who had been born in September, marvel over how many of us had arrived in November (Billie Sue and Jessie, Laura Alice and Vel), try to puzzle out why so few came in May ("Nobody but just Olive on the fourteenth and Bonnie Sue on the fifth"). The heat of August must have been what depressed the May birth rate, but nobody reasoned it out that far, least of all me.

And on we'd go, down the road, sweating thigh to thigh and mopping our necks and suffering from thirst. Our agony was immaterial. The graves had to

Shirley Abbott, a writer and the former editor of Horizon, *is married and has two daughters. This article is adapted from* Womenfolks, *to be published next spring by Ticknor and Fields.*

visited, the weeds pulled off them, the markers ad aloud, the flowers renewed. It was a shame to e living if the dead lacked flowers, an almighty sgrace if the next of kin had failed to buy a head- one.

In one sun-bleached old churchyard after another, e women would read the stones and recite the mes and vital dates of those neglected souls who cked markers. One or all of them would end up bbing before we got back into the car. Somebody id to cry or else the afternoon would have been waste. I always looked forward to the weeping. It oke the monotony. It was passionate and mystical, id I loved it.

You cannot spend your summer afternoons in such rsuits without learning that the past matters. outherners are famous for cherishing their fine old mes, but we were not cherishing our fine old name. 'e were simply clinging to what had gone before ith our own fierce sense of propriety. Within our mily there was no such thing as a person who did ot matter. Second cousins thrice removed mattered. 'e knew—and thriftily made use of—everybody's iddle name. We knew who was buried where. We ll mattered, and the dead most of all.

THE SOUTH where I was born and raised was Arkansas, in a peaceable little resort town called Hot Springs. When I was a child, just before World War II began, there were two ain local industries: the legal one was applying ealing waters to the sick, and the illegal one was ambling. The yearly race meet—which was not only gal but operated by the sovereign state of Arkan- as—also caused some cash to flow in a favorable irection, if only on a seasonal basis.

Arkansas was short on mint juleps and aza- ea gardens and had nothing to compare with the harms of Natchez, but it was plenty Southern. Contrary to what they showed in the movies in hose days, the South didn't mean bourbon nd hoop skirts, it meant red dirt and poor people, f which we had a lot. We also had our share of outhern historical monuments. Not antebellum nansions or statues of Robert E. Lee on his horse, or you could drive from Fayetteville to El Dorado nd then backtrack to Texarkana without ever see- ng any such thing. What you would see, though, vas shanties, tarpaper houses, tumbledown barns, nd chickens scratching industriously for bugs in ald front yards. In those days, if a car passed yours n the road, you'd have to roll the windows up or even pull over in the ditch and wait until the dust storm died down.

My mother and the other women I knew as a child were farm women, one or two generations re- moved from the real pioneer days, gentled and do- mesticated by the time I came among them. But the marks were there. Their skin was leathery from working outdoors. Some of these women were serene and some hot-tempered, and in either case they brooked no transgressions of their notions of morality, and woe to anyone who spoke to these women with disrespect. They were not innocent or submissive or delicately constituted, not afraid of balky cows or chicken hawks. It took them approximately two hours to transform a live rooster into Sunday dinner. They could reason with a mule and shoot a gun. But they also knew just how to take hold of a baby and what to say to a weeping two-year-old.

I used to hang on the backs of their chairs as they peeled peaches by the bushel and talked about how to keep dill-pickle jars from exploding, and why Cousin Rosity had got the cancer she was dying from, and what effect the drought would have on cattle prices, and how the doctors had decided to cut off poor old Uncle Jules's leg ("Orght to be ashamed of themselves, him being ninety and about dead anyhow of that diabetes —but danged if the old man didn't get up off his bed and run them out of his house"). Sometimes, thinking the children out of earshot, or perhaps deeming us old enough to hear, they would forget their ironclad morals and recount some scandal that was simmering in a cottage down the road a piece, or even tell a bawdy joke. Never anything explicit, merely the gropings of newlyweds, forever doomed to get the Vaseline mixed up with the glue. In later years, when I was adolescent, it shocked me to hear them laugh out loud about such things. How could they joke about anything so awesome? Had they no sense of romance?

Then, when the peaches were peeled and sliced into half a dozen enamel dishpans, they would make me stand up at a tub of scalding soapy water and wash out Kerr-Mason jars by the case. It took a child's hand for that. Theirs were too splayed. I have watched those knobby brown fingers laying French plaits into my cousin's black hair, my own being too fuzzy to braid, and I have known those women to walk five miles to spend an afternoon at a quilting frame.

Other Southern women were part of my life, too, infinitely more primitive than my own relatives, with roots further back in time. Until I was thirteen my father had earned a living mainly as a gambler—a bookmaker, I mean, in one of the illegal Hot Springs horse books. Then an agrarian fit momentarily took hold of him, and he moved us to a forty-acre farm west of Hot Springs. But what we had was barren ground. The apple orchard that he planted in high hope never bore. The well constantly threatened to go dry. We scarcely dared flush the toilet or bathe. Urban spirit that I was, I had no more aptitude as a farmer's daughter than my father had as a farmer. I hated digging potatoes, and I hated gathering eggs. I hated the smell of chicken houses—vinegary, sweet, rotten—despised the chickens, shrank from the finger-skinning work that went on seven days a week,

indoors and out. As I loaded the wire baskets, hoping not to infuriate the ill-humored old hens, I comforted myself with the thought that I had, after all, not been born for such indignities.

But there was an escape. On summer afternoons I would go across the road and visit with Grandma Lizzie Ethridge (not my grandma, of course, but the county's). We'd sit under a shade tree together, and she would try to teach me to crochet. "Make them little picots nice and even," she would command, although she called them "peekholes." I would stay and stay, laboriously chaining around my doily. At five o'clock, when I should have crossed the road again to help my parents with the chores, I would follow her on her rounds instead.

Lizzie Ethridge was scarcely five feet tall and from planting time to harvest she never put on a shoe. Though she kept herself very clean, she always smelled faintly of sweat. She wore a sunbonnet when she walked outside, and a print housedress with a one-piece overall apron. At the neck of her dress the trimming on her homemade "princess slip" showed. This was a loose cotton garment that she never went without, even in the hottest weather. Under these various modest layers were the mighty contours of a paleolithic stone goddess—the Venus of Willendorf—with vast breasts spreading atop a bulging belly. I would follow Granny down her rows of corn and pole beans or among her flowerbeds, watching as she bent over each blossom with a bucket of water and a dipper. The flowers would have made a botanist gape. They were profuse, exotic, tropical. She sent off for seeds advertised on the radio and, having no idea of the names of things, made up her own classes and genuses.

When we sat down to rest, she would tell stories, pausing now and then to pack her lower lip with snuff or spit the sickly brown liquid into a tin can. She had come into this county as a child some eighty years before, "from way over yonder," she said, waving a finger toward the eastern hills. She had helped clear a homeplace and plant a crop. She had heard mountain lions scream at night, had watched a milk snake drink from a cow's udder in the light of dawn. Had been saved by the Lord Jesus and baptized in a running stream. Had ridden home alone bareback one night from a brush-arbor tabernacle, the horse at full gallop and a puma running behind. She had married young and borne many children, some of whom died in infancy, some of whom, now old themselves, looked in on her from time to time.

SOMETIME in the late 1960s feminists brought forth the notion of sisterhood—of women "bonded" to women. Sisterhood was going to be "powerful," our Hanseatic League, our lobbying arm in the corridors of heightened awareness. But sisterhood was nothing new to me. It has been a zealously guarded secret among Souther women for years. Next to motherhood, sisterhoo is what they value most, taking an endless pleasur in the daily, commonplace society of one anothe that they never experience in male company.

The most vivid memories of my childhood ar long afternoons when my Aunt Vera would come t our house with her daughter June, and the four c us would form a kind of subversive cell. June an I would usually play, indoors and out, while ou mothers sewed or quilted or canned. Sometimes th four of us would dress and get in the car and driv around Hot Springs, buying thread and snaps at th dry-goods store, visiting some spring or other an drinking from tin cups, or "ratting up and down as my aunt called it, on Central Avenue. Hearin what they said on these afternoons, I gradually rea ized that my mother and her sister were not awe by men in the least, that they preferred each other company to that of their respective husbands.

I also realized that these two women had ur matronly desires, usually involving beautiful dress and travel, that otherwise went unmentioned—mer ly the circumspect fantasies of a pair of young hous wives caught in the coils of the commonplace. An yet the sharing of these fantasies made them laugh gave them a secret life as they bent their dark head over the sewing machine or a "pinker" that nev would pink. I could not have voiced the idea, bu I knew that the part of their lives they liked mo was here, with each other. Not at the supper tab or at work or in bed with their husbands. My fath used to be jealous of these tête-à-têtes, and he ha cause.

Often I spent summer afternoons in larger group of women, not my kin. The neighborhood beau shop is one of the foundations of society in sma Southern towns—you go there to get your ha "fixed," but that isn't the real reason, any more tha men congregate at the county courthouse to transa legal business.

The beauty "operator" is invariably a middle-age woman who found herself in need of a trade an solved the problem by getting her license and havin some shampoo sinks and hair dryers installed on th glassed-in porch. All the neighborhood women woul have standing appointments (as my mother did) an they'd bring their children along. It was an all-f male society—no man would dare enter the place– and here, if nowhere else, women said what the thought about men. And what they thought was o ten fairly murderous.

Those sweet-faced wives and mothers would s there wafting their wet, red fingernails in the ai hoping to get them dry before the comb-out wa finished, saying, "Now, Maidie, spray me good, want it to last through tomorrow. I'll sleep with m head in a bonnet," and they would gossip, of cours Every teenage romance or impending marriage, sep aration, illness, operation, or death got its going-ove

ut the leitmotif was their loyalty and fortitude in
ıe face of male foolishness, and, as a keen obbligato,
Don't ever let them know what you really think of
ıem. Humor them. Pretend you love them. Even
ıve them, if you must. But play a strong card to
ıeir weak one." That was not what they said, but
was what they meant.

It was always the same, wherever I went. As they
rank their Cokes, folded their stacks of fresh tow-
s, played bridge, or sewed, they assured one an-
ther, "Men are children. Men are little boys. They
an't stand pain. They never grow up. They can't
ıce the truth." All this information was deeply bur-
d in metaphor. "Albert got up at three o'clock to
) fishing this morning. Was just going to tiptoe out,
e said. Well, he couldn't find his hip boots, and I
ıought he would tear the house down. I finally had
) get up and find them for him. It was five by the
me he left." Or, "I told him if he wanted to smoke
ıat nasty pipe he could smoke it outside. I wasn't
oing to have that smell in my living room." Or,
He's just like a little child. If you don't have sup-
er on the table the minute he gets home, he gets
ıad. 'Course, after you feed him, you can get him
) do anything."

PSYCHIATRISTS have always focused on the passion that little girls feel for their fathers —understandably, since most of them are men. Girls are all supposed to be in train-
ıg from babyhood, sensing out the contours of love
nd loss as we fall in love with Daddy and are
)rced to postpone our pleasure. But I was in love
/ith my mother, too. I hated her doing housework,
ould not bear the sight of her in an old dress and
pair of unlaced oxfords, feeding soapy bedsheets
ıto the wringer, scraping carrots and parsnips at
he sink. But one thing she had acquired in town
/as the ability to be glamorous, to divorce herself,
ıy means of paints and polishes, from that other
/orld. I loved her glamorous aspect.

She had a marvelous drawer full of cosmetics. She
ıad an enormous dressing table, a yellow satin-
'eneer piece with a kneehole and a mirrored top,
ınd a vast standing mirror that reflected the whole
)edroom. There was a little low-backed bench and
our drawers; in them she kept all her wonderful
mplements of beauty. Not every day, but once a
/eek, or any time she was going out shopping, she
/ould bathe, put on her stockings and a lacy slip
ınd high-heeled shoes, and sit down to paint. I would
ıbandon dog, swing, book, or any other pursuit in
)rder to watch her. I'd come indoors and post my-
:lf beside the bench.

The open drawers gave off the most ravishing
;mells. Down in their depths sat little white jars with
)ink lids, black cylinders trimmed in silver, pink
glass things with tiny roses on top, high-domed boxes
with face powder inside (if you opened these on your own, they'd blow dust all over the table top), fresh powder puffs, miniature caskets with trick openings, compacts with pearl lids that shut with a glamorous click, vials of astringent and witch hazel, red boxes with logs of mascara inside, and pencils for what Mother always called her eyebrowls. Most seductive of all were the perfume bottles, some with glass stoppers and ribbons around the neck, one with a figurine on top. (No doubt there was enough coal-tar dye and other harrowing poisons in this array to have murdered any number of Renaissance popes. This was long before we learned to fear our own chemical magic.)

She would take her tweezers and hand mirror, search her freckled face for any wayward sprouts, and swiftly uproot them. Anxious about a black hair or two on her upper lip, she would apply a thick paste, like a pale green caterpillar, beneath her nose. It had to set five minutes and had a loathsome vinegary stench—I smell it still. When she removed the goo, she looked exactly as she had before. But she would survey the defoliated terrain with the solemnity of a military tactician.

On those rare afternoons when she did abandon her housework and go out, having brought her face to its state of daytime perfection, she would take up her car keys and shut the door on her immaculate house. She and I would set off for town together, and she seemed so beautiful in those moments that I knew I was in love with her. Unless we were going to the movies, "town" was a complete bust. We'd go find a parking place and go into Woolworth's for a spool of thread and a nickel's worth of candy. Maybe we'd look at a pattern book, and sometimes, to my despair, she'd bump into one of her thousands of cousins on the street and talk for half an hour. The exoticism of the afternoon would vanish sooner than the bag of candy.

Many years later, I stopped to wonder why a woman of her thoroughly practical inclinations would spend upward of an hour prettying up to go to the dime store. She certainly was not trying to attract a man—in the middle of the afternoon in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the only visible men were pumping gas in filling stations. She was not doing it for Daddy, for by the time he got home from work she'd be in a housedress again, perspiring over the kitchen range. Nor was she competing with other women. She was doing it for fun, and for a mark of her separateness, and for a way of showing herself—and me—that even so responsible a person as herself could do something that had no purpose to it. It was her one real break with her past. Maybe she wanted to let me know, in the most subtle way, that femininity was not merely the massive, serious, strenuous thing she usually made it seem to be, but occasionally a matter of pleasing yourself. And thus she delved into that dresser drawer, which is one of the most ancient sources of womanly corruption, without being corrupted by it. □

A HOUSE FULL OF MILLIONAIRES

How everyone but the rich got shut out of Congress. by Walter Shapiro

IT'S BEEN ten years since I last worked a parade. I can still see myself, just twenty-five years old, dressed in my one summer-weight suit, desperately trying to stay a block ahead of the baton twirlers, shaking hands and repeating with mechanical enthusiasm, "Hi, I'm Walter Shapiro and I'm running for Congress."

1972 was the year of my love affair with democracy and the people of the 2nd District of Michigan. I actually believed that a virtually bankrupt graduate student without family money, political connections, or even a car could get elected to Congress. In hindsight, I marvel at my poverty as well as my naïveté. I remember showing up hot and sweaty at an important political meeting because I had trouble getting up a steep hill on my bicycle. When my campaign suit became grimy, I had to wait it out in the dressing room of a quick-service dry cleaner. My wardrobe, such as it was, came courtesy of my only credit card, a Saks Fifth Avenue charge plate. It wasn't until two years later that I finally paid off my $189 bill.

Back in 1972, a political candidate didn't have to staff his campaign with CPAs and live in mortal terror of the Federal Election Commission (FEC). That's why I'm a little vague about how much my all-volunteer campaign cost. My best guess is about $8,000. We raised about $4,000 locally from Ann Arbor liberals and University of Michigan students; my parents back in Connecticut kicked in another $1,500; and most of the rest I borrowed, signing IOUs with the aplomb of a Saudi prince in Monte Carlo, though I had absolutely no collateral. The campaign law that was then in effect—passed by Congress in 1971 to replace an archaic 1925 statute—was primarily aimed at limiting television advertising. Since I could barely afford to print handbills, let alone buy TV spots, I found the law less than onerous.

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What was most inexplicable about my quixo campaign was that it almost worked. Even thou I was running to the left of George McGovern, came within 1,200 votes of winning a six-way Dem ocratic primary in a potentially winnable distri The floor leader of the state house, who had helpe reapportion the district to his own specificatio had to spend what seemed like a huge sum—$60,0 —to defeat me.

BACK THEN, I had not yet learned the tri of lacing my speeches and writings with e udite-sounding quotations. But had I know the wonders of *Bartlett's*, I would have us a snippet from *Federalist*, No. 57 to justify my t merity in running for Congress on an $8,000 budg Contrasting the republican House with the elit Senate, James Madison wrote, "No qualification wealth, of birth, of religious faith or of civil profe sion is permitted to fetter the judgment or disappoi the inclination of the people."

For more than 180 years after Madison wro those words, there remained clear-cut social distin tions between the two houses of Congress. The Se ate was first class and the House was . . . well . business class. This difference was, in large part, d termined by the differing costs of getting electe Senate campaigns have always been expensive, eve in the nineteenth century when senators were selec ed by state legislatures. For example, in 1896, Boi Penrose, one of the great boodlers of the Gilde Age, spent $500,000 on bribes to win a Senate se from Pennsylvania.

In contrast, House campaigns, through most of th twentieth century, have tended to be amateurish an within the financial reach of anyone who could affor an Oldsmobile. In 1948, Gerald Ford, then a thirty five-year-old lawyer, spent just $7,400 ($29,056 i today's currency) to defeat an incumbent congres man in the Michigan Republican primary. Wha

ıeled Ford's campaign, and those of so many other ɔngressional candidates, was not money but volun-ːers—in Ford's case, the pent-up energy of dozens f Grand Rapids housewives who discovered that orking for a political candidate was a respectable ay to escape from the kitchen.

Traditionally, the House has been the home of the rass-roots strivers. Never a microcosm of America, ıe House nonetheless provided a reasonably good ross section of the upper middle class. In the House loakroom, you could hear regional accents and find ll varieties of modern Babbittry, as small-town law-ːrs rubbed shoulders with ex-bankers and insurance gents. It wasn't the Paris Commune, but, for better r worse, Madison's ideal was roughly served.

As a way of finding out how Congress has changed ı the past decade, I decided to feign another run t my old Ann Arbor district (now represented by ːarl Pursell, a Republican liberal, or "gypsy moth"). ˙he first step that any serious candidate takes these ays is to visit a professional campaign consultant ı Washington, D.C. As if to reflect my dedication f purpose, I proposed to spend $100,000 on my ampaign.

"Just $100,000?" gaped Matt Reese, a bearlike Vest Virginian who has been renting out his services ɔ Democratic candidates for over a generation. ˙I'd tell you don't run unless you've got another ıgenda besides winning. The reason is, it isn't enough. ˙he secret to politics is repetitive contact. It costs noney to repeat a message. $100,000 is just not ːnough to run against an incumbent. It won't get ˙ou me as a consultant. It won't buy a television ɔresence. And it won't let you do much with direct nail or phone banks."

After a few brief calculations, Reese came up with what he considered a rock-bottom campaign budget ɔf $253,500 for running in my Ann Arbor district. Spending this kind of money wouldn't guarantee me victory, or even make me the favorite. It would be ust enough to keep my campaign afloat in hopes ːhat I'd be swept in on a Democratic tide. Reese's mythical budget broke down like this:

$125,000 for direct mail, phone banks, and in-person canvassing;

$50,000 for the campaign's fixed costs like the headquarters and the paid staff;

$35,000 for a limited media budget, mostly radio;

$25,000 for research, "targeting," and polling;

$18,500 for the oversight, planning, and hand-holding services of Matt Reese and Associates.

This budget reflects Reese's specialties—in-person canvassing and phone banks—as well as his belief that buying TV time makes no sense in a bargain-basement congressional race in the Detroit suburbs. Reese is also unusual in charging a flat rate (which, incidentally, would be much higher if this were a statewide campaign) for the part-time services of his firm. Many consultants derive the bulk of their income from commissions on the services they provide candidates—the kind of "cost-plus" accounting that has served the Pentagon so well. For example, according to Larry J. Sabato, author of *The Rise of Political Consultants*, media consultant Marvin Chernoff charges his clients a 33 percent advertising "production" commission and 17.65 percent "placement" commission.

Not surprisingly, Joe Rothstein, a Democratic consultant who specializes in media, dismissed Matt Reese's doubts about the utility of television advertising in a suburban congressional race. "I can think of virtually no situation where television isn't recommended," he told me. A single thirty-second spot at prime time on a network station in Detroit costs $2,000. That ad would reach about a dozen different congressional districts, eleven of which weren't ones I would be running in. But Rothstein believes that a candidate should ignore the waste and remember that "you're buying 100 percent of what you need to win."

It wasn't too long ago that media consultants like Rothstein were considered necessary only in Senate and gubernatorial races. Professor Michael J. Robinson of Catholic University in Washington, D.C., found, for example, that none of the freshman congressmen elected in 1958 hired a media consultant. By 1968, the figure was 43 percent. A decade later, in 1978, 63 percent of the incoming House members had won with the help of an outside media adviser. Another academic study estimated that altogether, 1978 House candidates





spent 56 percent of their budgets on the mass media. One of Rothstein's leading 1980 success stories was Tom Lantos, one of just three Democrats who unseated an incumbent Republican that year. Lantos, whose campaign cost $526,000, was the first House candidate ever to buy television time in the San Francisco Bay area.

Rothstein came up with a figure of $130,000 for a cost-conscious media budget for my phantom campaign against Carl Pursell. (That was only the media budget; for the rest of my campaign I'd have to go to other consultants.) Since money would be tight, the TV ads wouldn't start until mid-October, just three weeks before the general election. Even so, the advertising time alone on Detroit TV would cost $80,000 (which would include a percentage commission for Rothstein's firm if I had him place the ads). The rest would cover Rothstein's own production charges, at between $40,000 and $50,000. "Of course, you could produce commercials a lot cheaper," he assured me. "It might cost just $5,000 to film you behind a desk in a TV studio. But in this business, penny wise is pound foolish."

Once upon a time political parties selected candidates for office (and provided for free the kind of canvassing organization that Reese now provides for a fee). But since today the most important barrier to running for the House is simply the ability to pay for a "modern" campaign, consultants have become the informal gatekeepers of politics. Reese calculates that he spends a fifth of his time telling potential candidates they can't afford to run. "I've seen a lot of people with $50,000 in cash who can't raise another $250,000," he says. "I get almost rich men in here all the time who say they've got $50,000 or $75,000 of their own money to run for Congress. And I have to be the one to tell them that it isn't enough."

Another reason campaigns have become expensive is the professionalization of the campaign staffs themselves. Even the most important full-time jobs in congressional campaigns were once staffed by volunteers, working for subsistence in the hopes of going to Washington with a victorious congressman. This tradition is disappearing as fast as the one-paycheck marriage—or, rather, along with the on paycheck marriage. The pool of middle-class hous wives that Gerald Ford could tap in 1948 has drie up, as women abandon the volunteer market for th job market. And with college students now worry ing more about the law boards than the draft boar and also more worried than they used to be abo earning money during summers, another major sourc of political volunteers has disappeared.

Into the void step the well-paid pros. Suddenl House candidates are hiring only duly certified pr fessionals to carry their bags, drive their cars, an compose their press releases. A campaign manag for a Republican House candidate might be paid a an annual rate of $40,000. His Democratic equiv alent might get between $25,000 and $30,000. Eve Republican press secretaries and volunteer coord nators are getting close to $30,000. Today, when a ambitious young reporter leaves his job at the cit desk to sign on with a campaign, it's apt to be n so much for the excitement or the change as for th increase in salary. At least two colleges now offe degrees in campaign management.

Republican consultant Eddie Mahe points wit pride to the North Carolina congressional campaig of one of his favorite clients, Eugene "Red" Mc Daniel, a former navy captain who was a POW i North Vietnam for six years. Mahe has budgete $400,000 for McDaniel's campaign against a lack luster Democratic incumbent in a rural district. H envisions that McDaniel will eventually have seve professionals to assist him: a campaign manager, finance chairman, a press secretary, a political or ganization director, a scheduler, an office secretary and an aide-companion. "We are seeking experience people," Mahe says. "The business has just gotte too technical to depend on volunteers." Of course these pros will be augmented by a full complemen of outside advisers—a pollster, a general consultan (Mahe), a media consultant, and a direct-mail spe cialist for national fund-raising.

Such campaign budgets may be bloated, but fe congressional hopefuls even think about applyin zero-based budgeting to their own careers. Candi dates are often as emotionally vulnerable to pres sure to spend money as a sobbing widow wh wanders into a funeral home. No candidate want to spend the rest of his life brooding about how h lost because he tried to save $2,000 by stinting o last-minute ads, and consultants operating on a cost plus basis have at least one good reason to preclud this sort of regret. Rich, experienced politician seem no more immune to such blandishments tha poor ones. Media man David Garth may have found the consultant's dream candidate in Gov. Jay Rocke feller of West Virginia. Garth convinced Rocke feller to spend no less than $12 million (mostly in TV time) on his reelection campaign in 1980—even though this gave Rockefeller's opponent, former Gov. Arch Moore, his best campaign issue, and perhaps the best campaign slogan of the last decade.

'ake him spend it all, Arch," read Moore's bump-stickers.

Not every congressional candidate is a Rocke-er, of course, or even a Robert Dornan, the publican who spent a record $1.9 million in 1980 win his third term representing Los Angeles's anfront suburbs, or House Majority Leader Jim ight, who needed $1.2 million to return to Con-ss and help Tip O'Neill fight for the downtrodden. re alarming than these few outrageously extrav-nt campaigns is the prevalence of campaigns that merely very expensive. In 1980, it cost an aver- of $350,000 to defeat an incumbent congress-n. You had to spend nearly that much for the vilege of waiting until after midnight to give your ncession speech. Not counting incumbents, even ing candidates who managed to get more than 40 cent of the vote spent approximately $200,000 their futile campaigns.* Despite popular images, re were few significant differences in spending terns between Democratic and Republican House ndidates who waged serious campaigns.

In all, there were 205 House candidates (107 in-mbents and ninety-eight challengers) who spent re than $200,000 on their 1980 campaigns. That y not sound like much in a House with 435 seats, remember that in about three quarters of all use contests the incumbent is reelected without rking up a sweat. Thus the hundred or so top-llar races also represent virtually all the seriously ntested seats.

WHAT SORT of candidate can spend almost half a million dollars on a measly House seat? The question seems to answer itself, but fortunately there are important exceptions to the general rule that you ve to be rich to run for Congress. Unfortunately, ese exceptions seem to apply only to former astro-uts, war heroes (like McDaniel), pro-football arterbacks, or others blessed with a gimmick (usu-lly celebrity) that allows them to attract money om their fellow citizens. "It's a humiliating experi-nce to try to raise half a million dollars," consultant othstein told me.

For some, however, the experience is less humiliat-g than for others.

In Tennessee's 4th District, for example, twenty-x-year-old Cissy Baker is gamely making a run for ongress. Despite a rather short résumé, consisting ainly of a stint at Cable News Network, Ms. Baker, hose father happens to be the majority leader of e United States Senate, is well on her way to ising $600,000 for her campaign against twenty-even-year-old Democrat James Cooper, the son of former Tennessee governor. Heavily favored in alifornia's 12th District is Ed Zschau, a forty-two-year-old Republican. Zschau not only made a good deal of money in the electronics business in the district's "Silicon Valley," but he also lobbied Congress on behalf of the prosperous semiconductor firms in the area. He is not expected to have difficulty amassing contributions from his grateful colleagues to finance his $500,000 effort. Other congressional newcomers escape being rich only on a technicality—like young John LeBoutillier, congressman from Long Island. LeBoutillier disclosed assets of less than $15,000 two months after his election—in part because, at the age of twenty-seven, he had spent $250,000 of his own money on his campaign. His family, the Vanderbilts, helped him raise a bit more.

It is no coincidence that hard evidence of the greening of the House of Representatives is difficult to come by. Congress did not require much in the way of financial disclosure before the 1978 Ethics in Government Act—and even now, when the House Ethics Committee publishes an annual volume about the size of the Manhattan phone book reproducing all 435 financial disclosure forms, the format is purposely vague and confusing. Representatives need not give the dollar value of their holdings. Instead, they merely have to indicate whether a given investment falls into a rough category—for example, between $100,000 and $250,000. And the instructions clearly state that "a personal residence would not be reported unless any part of the residence produces rental income."

Still, crude sampling is possible. The letter *L* happens to fall in the middle of the current (1981) financial disclosure volume, and I took a close look at the holdings of the twenty-four House members



Mike Peters

* These figures, and those in the next paragraph, come from *ital Statistics on Congress 1982*, by Norman J. Ornstein, homas E. Mann, Michael J. Malbin, and John F. Bibby, be published by the American Enterprise Institute.

whose last names begin with that letter. Using conservative methodology, at least six—one quarter—of these twenty-four congressmen appear to have assets in the neighborhood of one million dollars. (This does not include Representative LeBoutillier, who lists only a few shares in the Webster Cash Reserve Fund.) Another four members probably have a net worth of over $500,000, especially if you make even a modest allowance for personal real estate.

Purists will say that it is dangerous to extrapolate too far from these figures, which are a survey of just 6 percent of the House at best. This is hogwash. The demand for statistical precision doesn't lead to truth, but serves as a convenient excuse to gloss over the changing social realities in today's Congress. While they have yet to install ticker tape machines in the congressional cloakrooms, there was more than a tad of self-interest involved when Congress, as part of last year's tax package, gleefully gutted the federal inheritance tax. I am willing to bet anyone a year's subscription to *Congressional Quarterly* that there are at least 100 millionaires currently serving in the House. In fact, after spending half a day with the 1981 financial disclosure forms, I'm convinced that close to half of our representatives in Washington have assets of half a million dollars which (according to figures compiled by John Holland of the U.S. Trust Company) would put them in the top 0.6 percent of all Americans.

Lyndon Johnson went into politics and got rich as a result. A little over thirty years later, Johnson's son-in-law Chuck Robb went into business for the express purpose of making enough money so he could *afford* to go into politics. Now Robb, after running a classic slick, professional, expensive, and vacuous campaign, is governor of Virginia.

We may expect the candidates who meet the new demands of congressional office-seeking to follow similar paths. More and more of them are likely to be hobbyists, wealthy men who see politics, and the

CHEAP SEATS

Legend has it that early in 1957 Ken Hechler, a political scientist fresh from a stint on Adlai Stevenson's speechwriting staff, sat down with a map of the United States and began searching for a winnable congressional district. Upon discovering that West Virginia's 4th District had elected an eighty-one-year-old congressman in the Eisenhower landslide of 1956, Hechler quickly engineered an appointment to the faculty at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. In 1958, the voters of the 4th District elected Hechler to the first of nine terms in the House.

Today, the search for a winnable district is mainly a search for a district you can afford to win. There are still some bargain-basement boroughs left, although the number is dwindling rapidly. Modern-day Ken Hechlers should look for a few key features when shopping for a House seat that won't inevitably cost $350,000:

Cheap TV. The trick is to find a metropolitan area that's big enough to be served by its own television station, but not so populous that television time costs $4,000 a minute and covers a dozen districts besides the one you want to win. Towns with a population between 150,000 and 400,000 are your best bets, although even these won't do if the political mapmakers have carved them up like pies into several districts. Some cities that fit the bill are Louisville, Kentucky; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Des Moines, Iowa. In Des Moines, despite his first tough race in twenty years, Democratic incumbent Neal Smith spent only $88,000 to win reelection in 1980.

Strong newspapers. Neal Smith had another advantage: a good local newspaper, the *Des Moines Register*, to give his campaign serious, full-time coverage—in other words, free publicity. In contrast, papers like *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, with dozens of races to cover, cannot devote much space to a single congressional race.

Compact geography. Every congressional district has about 500,000 voters. The question is whether they are packed close together, where you can easily reach them, or spread over two thirds of Kansas, as in that state's 1st Congressional District. Compact districts, naturally, are easier to find in the densely populated Northeast and industrial Midwest than west of the Mississippi, where campaigning for Congress by airplane is common.

There are a few other rules to follow. Democrats should look for colleges; they are still the best places to recruit volunteers. Popular local radio stations are another plus, since radio advertising, along with telephone banks, is one of the few modern campaign techniques whose cost in constant dollars has actually declined in the last few years. States like Indiana and Connecticut are also worth a second look, since they often have the rarest ingredient of them all: functioning political-party organizations. But no matter where you go, you cannot escape the two constants of modern campaign inflation: rising postage rates (for direct mail "targeted" to specific blocs of voters) and the fees of campaign consultants.

Where is the cheapest congressional district in the nation? Hard to say—but you could do worse than retrace Ken Hechler's steps and head for West Virginia. In 1980, Republican candidate Mick Staton spent just $155,000 to win his first term representing the state's 3rd District, around Charleston—a comparative steal. Charleston television stations neatly blanketed Staton's district, and Charleston is that rarest of small towns, possessing not one but two competing local newspapers that take their political coverage seriously.

Of course, it will always help if your opponent, like Hechler's original foe, is an octogenarian Republican running in a Democratic landslide year. Substance—as in ideology and issues—still has *something* to do with getting elected to Congress. **W.S.**

ebrity that even a House seat can now bring, as enjoyable avocation after a half-life of anonymous ancial success. (Of the new members elected to : House in 1980, only half had ever previously d any elected political office, down from over 75 rcent a decade earlier.) If these wealthy political ortsmen do not nominate themselves, the decrepit rties will probably importune them to run. One the first attempts at rebuilding the Democratic rty after its 1980 debacle was the creation of a exington Group," modeled after the Republicans' ncord Group, in which young political cadres re taught the techniques of getting elected. The mocrats charged $5,000 a head for the first meet- of their group, held at a Lake Tahoe resort. ie sort of people who could afford to blow $5,000 a weekend are now the most obvious pool of ture Democratic candidates.

T'S EASY to be shocked at what candidates will spend for a chance to go to Washington and complain about how they can't get by on $60,663 a year (plus liberal tax breaks). But there is thing wrong, per se, with a congressional campaign that spends $350,000 to communicate with the ters. George Thayer, in his book *Who Shakes the oney Tree?*, points out that saintly George Washgton, campaigning for the Virginia House of Burses in 1757, dispensed to the 391 voters in his strict twenty-eight gallons of rum, fifty gallons of m punch, thirty-four gallons of wine, forty-six llons of beer, and two gallons of cider—a little er a quart and a half of booze per voter. A modn House campaign conducted along Washingtonian es would cost in the neighborhood of $2 million. More important, puritanical outrage at the size campaign expenditures has, over the past decade, ne a great deal to exacerbate the real problem at results from high-cost campaigning—which is, course, that only a minuscule fraction of Amerans can even consider running for Congress. Ined, it is the 1974 campaign reforms, sponsored high-minded civic reform groups like Common ause, that have, however unintentionally, done the ost to ensure that challenging congressional inumbents is a millionaire's game.

The post-Watergate debate over congressional ampaign reform was subtly split between advocates f public financing of campaigns and advocates of rict statutory ceilings on campaign contributions nd spending. The former tended to be populists, ho wanted to open Congress up to a broader cross ection of citizens. The latter were the Puritans, hocked by how much some people would spend to et elected. The positions weren't completely inompatible, of course, and some reformers enterained both views.

Not so the people who actually made the decision: the 535 congressmen and senators. They had, by definition, a rather definite class interest, shared with none of their fellow citizens, that only the Puritan approach satisfied: assuring their own reelection at the lowest possible cost. Virtually every incumbent enters a reelection campaign with a homefield advantage in the form of high name-recognition, better access to the media, the benefits of almost two years of free mailing to the district and "constituent services" like tracking down lost government checks and greasing grant applications. The less a challenger is permitted to spend, the larger these benefits of incumbency loom. If all campaign spending were ruled illegal, few congressmen (except possibly convicted felons) would fail to be reelected.

So Congress rejected public financing (which, to an incumbent, means letting the taxpayers subsidize your opponent) and passed a campaign reform bill that was a Puritan's delight, limiting everything except dancing on Sunday. The maximum an individual could give to a congressional campaign was $1,000 in the primary and $1,000 more in the general election. Thanks to astute lobbying by the AFL-CIO, which wanted to protect its political arm (COPE), "political action committees" (PACs) were allowed to give each candidate two $5,000 contributions. (The result was the proliferation of business-oriented PACs, which have overwhelmed labor spending in the last few elections.) A ceiling on campaign spending in a House race was set at $70,000, plus a like amount for the primary. Significantly, the law also tried to reduce the built-in advantages of wealthy candidates. There was a flat $25,000 limit on how much a House candidate (or his immediate family) could give or loan to his campaign.

Like most reform legislation, the 1974 act was rife with unanticipated consequences. The limits on individual giving took the Clement Stones and Richard Mellon Scaifes out of congressional politics, but also put a crimp in the high-minded activities of a number of well-known moneyed liberals. The strict contribution limits were a bonanza for direct-mail fund-raisers like Richard Viguerie, whose mailing lists suddenly had more political value than the checkbooks of the entire Business Roundtable. One suspects that the absurdly low campaign spending ceilings would have made a House seat as secure as a life peerage, but we'll never know, thanks to the Supreme Court.

In early 1976, before the new law had fully taken effect, the Court, in a curious decision, ruled that the overall campaign spending ceilings infringed the First Amendment. Moreover, in a separate opinion, the Court held that it was unconstitutional to restrict, in any way, the amount a congressional candidate (or his immediate family) could spend on his own behalf. "The candidate, no less than any other person, has a First Amendment right to engage in the discussion of public issues and vigorously and tirelessly to advocate his own election. . . ." the Court

stated. But the Court let stand the limits on how much individuals and PACs were allowed to contribute to congressional campaigns.

THE RESULT is a bizarre situation that magnifies exponentially the advantage of the wealthy candidate. Thanks to the Court, the lid is off overall spending on congressional campaigns. But only contributions to one's own (or one's family's) campaign are freed from the puritanical limits imposed by the Congress on contributions to any one candidate. Thus candidates who depend on the kindness of strangers must rustle up hundreds of individual $1,000 contributions (or slightly fewer $5,000 PAC contributions), but candidates who finance themselves can simply write out a check for any amount they wish.

Actually, wealthy candidates don't just write checks these days to pay for the salaries of their pollsters, media consultants, and professional bagcarriers. Instead, the prudent thing to do is to loan your campaign committee the needed cash. Alas, the IRS doesn't allow free-spending politicians to deduct these loans as bad debts. But if a candidate manages to buy his way into Congress, there is a strong likelihood that at least some of these loans will be repaid with after-the-fact campaign contributions. Somehow, these tend to gravitate to congressional incumbents rather than to those who also ran and lost.

Indeed, William Sweeney, the deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, says, "The fastest-growing source of campaign funds in this country is not PACs, but the personal indebtedness of candidates." The Federal Election Commission (an agency whose utter incompetence even Congress could not reasonably have anticipated) no longer bothers to compile statistics on such matters, but the last calculations (from 1978) showed that 9 percent of House campaign spending came out of the candidates' pockets, either through loans or donatio A more dramatic picture emerges in a study of t 1978 campaign, conducted by the Kennedy Sch of Government at Harvard, which found that nc incumbent Democrats personally absorbed about percent of the cost of running for office.

An informal survey of my own underlines t trend toward self-financing of campaigns throu loans. I obtained the campaign disclosure repo of one quarter of the eighty-four freshmen elect to the House in 1980. None of these twenty-o candidates *gave* his campaign more than a ni gardly $5,000. But loans were an entirely differe matter. Ten winning candidates reached in th pockets for at least $25,000, which was the origin ceiling in the 1974 campaign reform act. Six loan their campaigns more than $50,000. Four cross the $100,000 mark. And two had the wherewith and the commitment to public service to loan the campaigns more than $400,000 . . . *each*.

One of them was Texas Democrat William Pa man, the son of the fiery populist Wright Patma who loaned his campaign precisely $495,593.15. Tl other was farmer, engineer, state legislator, and Iow Republican Cooper Evans, who chipped in $440,00 Asked whether the joy of serving in the Hou turned out to be worth this large personal inves ment, Evans answers quickly, "It isn't a matter joy for me. I'll tell you, there isn't much joy her It's a demanding and debilitating job. It's not a ma ter of pleasure, but of public service."

It is this level of congressional self-indebtedne that magnifies the well-publicized political influenc of corporate PACs. Say you're a freshman Dem crat with a seat on the influential House Commerc Committee. In 1980, the PAC community generou ly bankrolled your Republican opponent, and as result, you had to take out a second mortgage i order to loan your campaign $75,000. Thanks t your committee assignment, you will have no prob lem getting PAC help for your reelection campaig Contrary to popular impression, a $5,000 PAC con tribution ($10,000 if you include the primary) unlikely to buy your unquestioning support of Rea ganomics. After all, $5,000 is but one percent o your projected 1982 campaign budget.

But what keeps you awake nights is that still un paid $75,000 second mortgage from your first cam paign. Fortunately, the law allows PACs to mak ex post facto contributions as well. The same PA that bitterly opposed you throughout 1980 can no make amends with two $5,000 contributions to hel retire your campaign debt. This kind of after-the fact giving is dangerously close to a legally sanc tioned bribe. Your almost defunct 1980 campaig committee takes in $10,000 in new contributions thereby enabling it to repay $10,000 of your $75,00 loan. The money goes directly into your persona checking account, just as surely as if you were Spir Agnew accepting cash in pristine white envelopes.

The ten largest expenditures by House candidates, 1980

	Candidate	Result	Expenditure
1.	Robert Dornan (Rep.-Calif.)	won	$1,937,209
2.	Jim Wright (Dem.-Tex.)	won	1,193,622
3.	James Corman (Dem.-Calif.)	lost	905,231
4.	Jack Fields (Rep.-Tex.)	won	800,343
5.	John Brademas (Dem.-Ind.)	lost	744,068
6.	Richard Huff (Rep.-Ariz.)	lost	696,954
7.	Morris Udall (Dem.-Ariz.)	won	688,173
8.	David Robinson (Dem.-Ill.)	lost	674,974
9.	Al Ullman (Dem.-Ore.)	lost	670,390
10.	William Patman (Dem.-Tex.)	won	665,984

How about some more reforms? At least, you would think, somebody might be interested in correcting the imbalance created when the Supreme Court shot holes in half Congress's 1974 reform effort. But these days ere is about as much enthusiasm for campaign ending reform as for national health insurance, nich is to say none at all. It is a cause without a nstituency; even Common Cause has turned its tention elsewhere. Also, alas, it is a problem with- it an obvious solution.

Public financing of congressional races would be government-guaranteed job program for campaign nsultants. Sharp restriction of television commerals (which numerous reformers have suggested since e 1960s) would lock in the incumbents, and while striction of TV ads would limit the current main urce of campaign expenses, money might shift to qually expensive (but often more effective) techques like direct mail. Mandating *free* television me for congressional candidates would trigger a ewer revolt in markets like Los Angeles and New ork, where a single station might reach thirty different congressional districts, with perhaps 100 different candidates demanding their prime-time allotent in the week before the election. And, given the upreme Court's ruling, there is nothing that can be one to restrict candidates who will pay any price nd bear any burden to elect themselves to Congress.

Even minor reforms appear to stand little chance n the current Congress. The Republicans, awash in 'AC money, are opposed to any change that could ven slightly jeopardize their financial advantage. And the Democrats are in such a state of confusion hat they would probably oppose lifting even the ridiculously low $1,000 ceiling on individual contributions, because they fear it would strengthen the GOP's hand in the short run.

There is, however, some hope that the cost of campaigns will begin to level off as the mystique of he consultants begins to be dispelled. Currently, a ort of Catch-22 seems to be at work. Keith Raffel, n Democrat running in the uphill race against Republican Zschau in California, says the first question ne invariably gets from political reporters is "How nuch are you going to spend on your campaign?" The size of your campaign budget (and whether you've signed up a first-class consultant) has become the primary test of political legitimacy. It is *assumed* you can't run for Congress on less than $300,000. So, well-qualified candidates with less money are immediately viewed as losers by the press, other politicians, and potential contributors—and because they are perceived as losers, they can't raise money to cover even modest budgets, and then they invariably go down to defeat, proving the original assumption.

Almost invariably. Given the incentives for consultants to talk their clients into spending money, it should be no surprise that consultant-orchestrated campaigns are often rife with the sort of waste and abuse that, if it were government money, would keep Ronald Reagan supplied with anecdotes for a month of press conferences. Bernadette Budde, the director of political education for BIPAC, a trendsetter in the world of political action committees, argues that many House candidates "are winning on $100,000 or $150,000, even if they are actually spending $300,000." Eventually, she said, "you reach overkill. It's like nuclear war." Unfortunately, Budde's evidence that the little guy can still be elected is twenty-nine-year-old New Jersey Republican Christopher Smith. True, Smith raised only $79,000 in 1980 and still defeated a powerful Democratic committee chairman. But the chairman in question was Frank Thompson, who in the midst of the campaign was indicted (and subsequently convicted) for taking a $50,000 bribe as part of Abscam.

There are better examples, however. Take Sam Gejdenson, a thirty-four-year-old Connecticut Democrat who sports a bushy mustache and favors suspenders and pink shirts. Gejdenson won an open House seat in 1980 by eschewing high-priced consultants and by somehow rousing a large flock of that almost extinct political species, the volunteer. The only television time he bought during the primary was $5,000 worth, mostly because his better-known opponent was running a saturation media campaign. "The effect of our TV ads wasn't very strong politically," Gejdenson says, "but it was very strong for the morale of our volunteers."

Gejdenson, who had completed an old-fashioned political apprenticeship by serving two terms in the Connecticut legislature, spent about $227,000 for both the primary and a close general-election fight. This is far from a modest sum, although it is on the low end of the current price range. More important, it was raised by a candidate without personal wealth or an obvious fund-raising gimmick. Gejdenson's financial disclosure form, which he handed me, unasked, in the midst of our interview, showed that the soon-to-be congressman and his wife earned a total of $8,679 in 1980, mostly from Karen Gejdenson's teaching in a Montessori school. (The year before, the couple earned around $18,000; nor is there a hidden Gejdenson family fortune at work here.) "During the campaign, we lived on Mastercard and VISA," Gejdenson says with a sort of perverse pride. After the election, when the Gejdensons went to Europe on vacation, their Mastercard bounced at a hotel in Greece because they were over their limit.

Currently living comfortably on his $60,000 salary, Sam Gejdenson is not now, nor has he ever been, poor. But he is from a social group—the heart of the middle class—that is no longer much in evidence in a lower house restricted, in Madisonian terms, by "qualifications" of wealth, birth, and mailing list. We may hope he will be joined by other politicians, similarly unqualified, who flout the wisdom of the consultants. □

ROBERT WALSER

THREE STORIES

THE JOB APPLICATION

Esteemed gentlemen,

I am a poor, young, unemployed person in the business field; my name is Wenzel. I am seeking a suitable position, and I take the liberty of asking you, nicely and politely, if perhaps in your airy, bright, amiable rooms such a position might be free. I know that your good firm is large, proud, old, and rich, thus I may yield to the pleasing supposition that a nice, easy, pretty little place would be available, into which, as into a kind of warm cubbyhole, I can slip. I am excellently suited, you should know, to occupy just such a modest haven, for my nature is altogether delicate, and I am essentially a quiet, polite, and dreamy child, who is made to feel cheerful by people thinking of him that he does not ask for much, and allowing him to take possession of a very, very small patch of existence, where he can be useful in his own way and thus feel at ease. A quiet, sweet, small place in the shade has always been the tender substance of all my dreams, and if now the illusions I have about you grow so intense as to make me hope that my dream, young and old, might be transformed into delicious, vivid reality, then you have, in me, the most zealous and most loyal servitor, who will take it as a matter of conscience to discharge precisely and punctually all his duties. Large and difficult tasks I cannot perform, and obligations of a far-ranging sort are too strenuous for my mind. I am not particularly clever, and first and foremost I do not like to strain my intelligence overmuch. I am a dreamer rather than a thinker, a zero rather than a force, dim rather than sharp. Assuredly there exists in your extensive institution, which I imagine to be overflowing with main and subsidiary functions and offices, work of the kind that one can do as in a dream?—I am, to put it frankly, a Chinese, that is to say, a person who deems everything small and modest to be beautiful and pleasing, and to whom all that is big and exacting is fearsome and horrid. I know only the need to feel at my ease, so that each day I can thank God for life's boon, with all its blessings. The passion to go far in the world is unknown to me. Africa with its deserts is to me not more foreign. Well, so now you know what sort of a person I am.—I write, as you see, a graceful and fluent hand, and you need not imagine me to be entirely without intelligence. My mind is clear, but it refuses to grasp things that are many, or too many by far, shunning them. I am sincere and honest, and I am aware that this signifies precious little in the world in which we live, so I shall be waiting, esteemed gentlemen, to see what it will be your pleasure to reply to your respectful servant, positive drowning in obedience,

Wenzel

NERVOUS

I am a little worn out, raddled, squashed, downtrodden, shot full of holes. Mortars have mortared me to bits. I am a little crumbly, decaying, yes, yes. I am sinking and drying up a little. I am a bit scalded and scorched, yes, yes. That's what it does to you. That's life. I am not old, not in the least, certainly I am not eighty, by no means, but I am not sixteen anymore either. Quite definitely I am a bit old and used up. That's what it does to you. I am decaying a little, and I am crumbling, peeling a little. That's life. Am I a little bit over the hill? Hmm! Maybe. But that doesn't make me eighty, not by a long way. I am very tough, I can vouch for that. I am no longer young, but I am not old yet, definitely not. I am aging, fading a little, but that doesn't matter; I am not yet altogether old, though I am probably a little nervous and over the hill. It's natural that one should crumble a bit with the passage of time, but that doesn't matter. I am not very nervous, to be sure, I just have a few grouches. Sometimes I am a bit weird and grouchy, but that doesn't mean I am altogether lost, I hope. I don't propose to hope that I am lost, for I repeat, I am uncommonly hard and tough. I am holding out and holding on. I am fairly fearless. But nervous I am, a little, undoubtedly I am, very probably I am, possibly I am a little nervous. I hope that I am a little nervous. No, I don't hope so, one doesn't hope for such things, but I am afraid so, yes, afraid so. Fear is more appropriate here than hope, no doubt about it. But I certainly am not fear-stricken, though I might be nervous, quite definitely not. I have grouches, but I am not afraid of the grouches. They inspire me with no fear at all. "You are nervous," someone might tell me, and I would reply coldbloodedly, "My dear sir, I know that quite well, I know that I am a little worn out and nervous." And I would smile, very nobly and coolly, while saying this, which would perhaps annoy the other person a little. A person who refrains from getting annoyed is not yet lost. If I do not get annoyed about my nerves, then undoubtedly I still have good nerves, it's clear as daylight, and illuminating. It dawns on me that I have grouches, that I am a little nervous, but it dawns on me in equal measure that I am cold-blooded, which makes me uncommonly glad, and that I am blithe in spirit, although I am aging a little, crumbling and fading, which is quite natural and something I therefore understand very well. "You are nervous," someone might come up to me and say. "Yes, I am uncommonly nervous," would be my reply, and secretly I would laugh at the big lie. "We are all a little nervous," I would perhaps say, and laugh at the big truth. If a person can still laugh, he is not yet entirely nervous; if a person can accept a truth, he is not yet entirely nervous. Anyone who can keep calm when he hears of some distress is not yet entirely nervous. Or if someone came up to me and said: "Oh, you are totally nervous," then quite simply I would reply in nice, polite terms: "Oh, I am totally nervous, I know I am." And the matter would be closed. Grouches, grouches, one must have them, and one must have the courage to live with them. That's the nicest way to live. Nobody should be afraid of his little bit of weirdness. Fear is altogether foolish. "You are very nervous!"

"Yes, come by all means and calmly tell me so! Thank you!"

That, or something like it, is what I'd say, having my gentle and courteous bit of fun. Let man be courteous, warm, and kind, and if someone tells him he's totally nervous, still there's no need at all for him to believe it.

From Selected Stories *by Robert Walser, translated by Christopher Middleton. Translation copyright © 1982 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.*

Robert Walser was born in Biel, [illegible] in 1878. The author of over fifteen books, countless poems, and a thousand or more short [illegible] admired by Kafka, Hesse and Benjamin. In 1929, suffering from acute schizophrenia and [illegible] committed himself to a sanatorium. He died there in 1956, never having written [illegible]

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CELEBRATION OF CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

Flying along streets that were swept almost to a shine, a journalist jotted into his unremittingly active global brain: fliers are flying in the blue above my head, which has no hat on it, something I find beautiful and, at the same time, healthy. I see a raw-materials truck and am astonished at my talent to perceive the way a cavalier handles his umbrella, which once belonged to the Duchess of Capulia. An official I identify by the fact that, in the sunshine, he conceals his hands in his trouser pockets. Some people do not dare to greet you, because they think it possible you might not return their courtesy. An acquaintance of mine had expected me to display the weakness of greeting him first. I refrained from doing so, however, with an almost magnificent alacrity. He thereby sacrificed the assurance of his conduct toward me, which conveyed to me that he held me in esteem but did not want to advertise it. As for me, it is this way: when I meet a person whom I respect, I remove from my mouth, four meters before the encounter, the *Stumpen*, which is what we call a cigar hereabouts, I doff my cap and bow so subtly and inconspicuously that there can be no possible doubt as to my showing esteem, interpolation, every bit of it, and now I suddenly hear a gentleman say to his neighbor: "There goes one of those people who are inclined to be not normal." A lady cyclist was carrying a string bag full of vegetables and fruits. A girl was wearing red high shoes, in impressive contrast to her white-stockinged leg. In front of a hotel restaurant, where a governess is sitting whom I am interested in, not that I have no interests in other quarters, stands a wagon loaded with a big barrel, which might contain nectar. A soft autumnal shimmer lies upon every street and housefront. Hills on which vineyards are planted and evenings by lake shores arise before my lively mind's eye, together with little dance halls in oak forests on islands. Perhaps I shall lodge for three or four days in a country room with furniture of the rococo period. Yet I doubt if I shall go there before completing, as I must, the present assignment. "*Quatre vingt quatre*" now rings in my ears. A lot of French is spoken in our city. In front of the municipal theater, a singer is arguing with an actor. A little child smiles at me, but, with children, one need not emphasize their smallness, because all children are small, although, here and there, big ones exist, perhaps more big ones than one is inclined to suppose.

Over lunch I read, in a newspaper favored by liberal thinkers, about a railway accident. I recall precisely that I ate lunch only three hours ago. A poem is pursuing me; I shall have the energy to write it down. When girls want to be noticed they start to make arrangements with their hair; this can be perceived as a subtle challenge to spend one's time voluntarily falling in love; but time is expensive, it wants to be used up to the full. People without energy like to talk about energy. For my part I am convinced that I have a quiet will of my own. Ah, how distinctive she was, this servant girl leading a little boy by the hand! Once I blew, to a nursemaid who stood for a superior style of life, a kiss. The movement of her head told me: "Save yourself the trouble." Often one is in somewhat too good a mood. The houses today had such a beauty, a restraint, just standing there—I can hardly find words for it. A poet, one of those disturbers of genteel little drawing rooms, took his lady, whom he idolized, by her tiny gloved hand and asked how she had liked the verses that he had been quite understandably saucy enough to send her. She answered, with a blush: "I was very glad, but please, meanwhile, let me go." For the simplicity of such language the poet appeared to have no perfect understanding such as she would have desired. I drew his attention to the reprehensibility, or impropriety, that, I said, seemed to me inherent in his behavior. While her molester was looking at me, the noble creature fled.

A city notable mumbled something in his beard; the beard was absent, but the expression is favored by many. Some turns of speech occur to us of their own accord. In a bookshop window shone, resplendent, the editions of a great poet. I refer to Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, the centenary of whose birth is being celebrated by the civilized world, which one might also call the impatient or rushing world. Civilization still seems to be an unfinished task. We shall always be vain about it, but never proud of it, and we shall never say that we have nothing more to learn, and we shall remember not only at the centenaries of famous poets the responsibilities that civilization lays upon us, and first and foremost when being civilized is our concern we shall not brag about it. To be sure, only the person who is always trying to be civilized is a civilized person, a person who is quite simply trying to be civilized, because that, if the truth were told, is not by any means so easy. □

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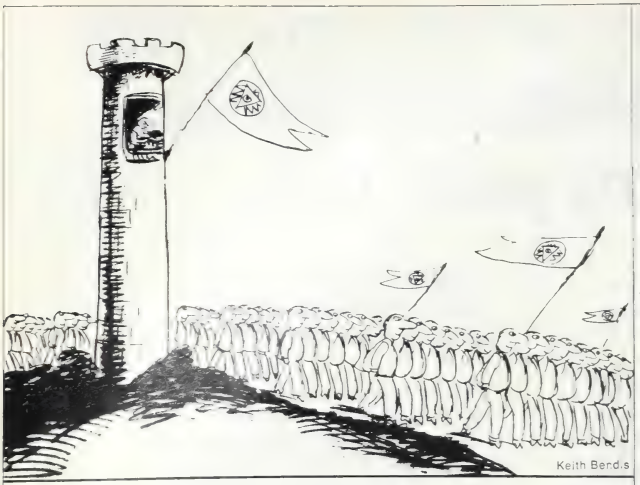
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The Lord and the Intellectuals

by Christopher Hitchens

They're too smart to believe in God, but they all believe in religion.

SINCE the Enlightenment, a healthy contempt for religion and those who promote it has been widespread among those who cherish the powers of reason. But lately, in what is proclaimed as a secular age, atheism and anticlericalism have fallen very much out of fashion. Even—one might say especially—among those with no time for religion in their own personal lives there is a new respect for the prevailing religious superstitions. Intellectuals have lost the courage of their nonbelief.

Confirmed Marxists plead the case of the rebels in El Salvador by quoting nuns and archbishops. Secular Jews make alliances with anti-Semitic evangelists who think that God gave religious and other Jews a textual break on the West Bank. Conservatives who haven't been to church or synagogue for years invoke the importance of "religious values." Gibbon said of the many religions in the declining Roman Empire that they "were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosophers as equally false; and by the magistrates as equally useful." Today's policy intellectuals, or philosopher-magistrates, hold the last two views simultaneously.

Flannery O'Connor once devised a character called Mrs. Shortley, who was bucolic and superstitious but nobody's fool:

> *She had never given much thought to the devil for she felt that religion was essentially for those people who didn't have the brains to avoid evil without it. For people like herself, for people of gumption, it was a social occasion providing the opportunity to sing; but if she had ever given it much thought, she would have considered the devil the head of it and God the hanger-on.*

MRS. SHORTLEY'S views on religion are pretty much shared by the urbane Mr. George Will. In his most recent collection of columns (*The Pursuit of Virtue and Other Tory Notions*), Will quotes from Chekhov's description of a character: "He was a rationalist, but he had to confess that he liked the ringing of church bells." Will adds, "Me too." But, as demonstrated in other columns in the same collection, Will also approves of churchgoing and true belief as valuable constraints on minds less rationalist than his own.

Mr. William Barrett, philosopher of this parish and former editor of *Partisan Review*, falls into the church-bell temptation in his recent memoir, *The Truants*. Mr. Barrett was an intimate of Delmore Schwartz, Mary McCarthy, Lionel Trilling, Philip Rahv—that lot. He was on easy terms with secular liberalism, and in *The Truants* describes how a combination of Jewishness and skepticism kept the team at arm's length from American religiosity. Yet here he is on Lionel Trilling's obsequies, which took place in St. Paul's chapel at Columbia University, with a rabbi and a minister officiating:

> *Yet I remember being faintly troubled at the time; and as I reflect on those last rites I find myself more and more troubled by the perplexing questions they beget. Was the service religious or not? In some sense it was not completely secular—there was the chapel and there were the psalms. Suppose there had been a completely secular service. Imagine it taking place in one of those funeral parlors—they often dignify themselves by the name of chapels—farther down*

Christopher Hitchens writes for the Nation.

on Broadway. . . . Even the imagination of such a service seems shocking and inappropriate for a man like Trilling. It was fitting that there should be a chapel and those psalms. . . . Hence the psalms.

lorror at the aesthetic defects of a ecular departure soon drives Barrett) question his very nonbelief. In a assage that the great rationalist 'rilling would have found extraorinary, he poses "the nagging ques- on" raised by his preference for salms:

Suppose we, as moderns, still feel the aesthetic need for this archaic language at such times. How many generations before its use as an aesthetic adornment for a funeral service begins to lose its force, and becomes a routine gesture? . . . And if that archaic language does become at last routine, what would be required for its renewal?

)f such are calls for religious "re- ewal" born. Anything but burial farther down on Broadway."

A final temptation to religious)osturing among the formerly en- ightened is the sheer utility of pre- ended piety as a rhetorical weap-)n. A recent example is Jonathan chell's *The Fate of the Earth,* vhich contains a detailed rebuttal)f "the suggestion, made by some Christian fundamentalists, that the uuclear holocaust we threaten to inleash is the Armageddon threat- ned by God in the Bible." Schell nsists "it is not God, picking and hoosing among the things of His reation, who threatens us, but we)urselves." How does Schell know his? If he believes in God (which nternal evidence does not suggest, despite the devotional uppercase *H*s and *G*s), why is he allowed to nterpret His plan? And, if he does not believe in God, why mention Him at all in this connection? The Christian fundamentalist view of Doomsday may be unpolished, but t is unfalsifiable, just like the op- posing view that God does *not* want our extinction. It is not for human- ists to say which of these positions is "blasphemous" (Schell's word).

THIS KIND of selective indulgence shown toward religion has some ironic and some farcical consequences. The attitude of conservatives toward belief has always been a fairly cynical one; it reinforces tradition and continuity and (in some fortunate epochs) actual obedience. Among liberals and radicals, therefore, there has traditionally been a suspicion of political clergy and a feeling that the priests should stick to minding their flocks. Hasn't there? Well, it depends. When Ngo Dinh Diem took a well-timed vacation from the exercise of despotism in his native (South) Vietnam, his hosts in the United States were the Maryknoll Order. At that time there was much liberal fulmination about Francis Cardinal Spellman and his "meddling," for all the world as if the Church had no business interfering in politics. Now today, when the Maryknoll Order has its martyrs in El Salvador and is quick off the mark with a burst of "liberation theology" (an audacious oxymoron), all manner of moon-faced liberals can be found to argue for the healing and creative role of Catholicism. (And for the sake of symmetry, Tom Bethell of the American Enterprise Institute denounced the raped and butchered Maryknoll sisters as "bull-dyke socialists.")

Piety on the left is a terrible thing to behold. A recent issue of the *Washington Monthly* was consecrated to articles about the right place of religion in American life. Ms. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend called, in a striking contribution, for "A Rebirth of Virtue." She did not dwell on any religious belief of her own, though the reasoning was clearly of Roman provenance. All she thought was that it would be good if *other people* got religion. In a reference to her late father she made the following point:

In 1968, for instance, my father was able to earn the trust of black and white women and men largely because it was clear that he believed in them and in their values. His religious conviction made him acceptable to many people who after his death could vote only for George Wallace.

Yes. Religion helped Bobby Kennedy win votes. The trouble is that George Wallace was also forever using his flock. He also liked to give the impression that he "believed in them and in their values." If Ms. Kennedy Townsend gets the religious revival that she seeks, how is she going to confine its validity to what she calls "liberals"?

Once allow that "religious convictions" are admirable in themselves, and where is the limit? It's not denied that the Reverend Jim Jones gave some purpose and meaning to the (abbreviated) lives of his unhappy followers. All agree that the Black Muslims rescue junkies and dropouts. Shiite Islam has cheered the lives of people in downtown Te-



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by Tracy Kidder
Atlantic Monthly Press
Little, Brown

NAMING NAMES
by Victor S. Navasky
Penguin Books

Hardcover / HISTORY / *Paperback*

PEOPLE OF THE SACRED MOUNTAIN
by Father Peter John Powell
Harper & Row

THE GENERATION OF 1914
by Robert Wohl
Harvard University Press

POETRY

LIFE SUPPORTS
by William Bronk
North Point Press

Hardcover / SCIENCE / *Paperback*

LUCY
by Donald C. Johanson and Maitland A. Edey
Simon & Schuster

TAKING THE QUANTUM LEAP
Fred Alan Wolf
Harper & Row

TRANSLATION
Co-winners:

IN THE SHADE OF SPRING LEAVES
Translated by Robert Lyons Danly
Yale University Press

THE TEN THOUSAND LEAVES
Translated by Ian Hideo Levy
Princeton University Press

heran. Presumably—and reported—ly—Satanism creates a kind of bon and obligation among its adheren (people who otherwise "could vot only for George Wallace"?). Onc aboard the religion train, you hav no reason to alight at any partic ular stop.

The ultimate example of a non believer using appeals of a pseudo religious kind, to charm those wh think that such appeals make th speaker more impressive rather tha less, occurred in Vienna in Jun 1979. The SALT deal was bein signed, and in one of his speeche urging acceptance Leonid Brezhne said to Jimmy Carter: "God wil not forgive us if we fail." This un likely exhortation was later "clar ified" by Soviet spokesmen. Afte Brezhnev's flack, Zamyatin, had failed to strike the remark from the official record, another spokesman said, perhaps more revealingly than he knew: "It was simply because he [Brezhnev] wanted to express his commitment to SALT in terms that Carter would understand and iden tify with."

Precisely. If a guy believes he has been born again, it's reasonable to assume that he will believe anything. At any rate, it's worth a try.

Carter fell because, among other reasons, he was seen as a gullible and feebleminded person. Gull ibility and credulity are considered undesirable qualities in every de partment of human life—except re ligion. Like William Barrett, who is a "modern" until he reaches the cemetery gates, many people will deride a man's tendency to wish ful thinking until they reach the "private matter" of his religion. Yet why should we consider the incul cation of credulity into children and adults to be desirable if performed by ministers of a (recognized) church? Why are we praised by godly men for surrendering our "godly gift" of reason when we cross their mental thresholds?

Sometimes, among people of ad vanced views, a distinction is made between religious belief, held to be desirable, and "organized religion," held in traditional contempt. You would think such people had in-

ented religious belief themselves. ut the desire for such a distinction natural and understandable. Pope nocent III told Simon de Montrt to massacre all the heretics in ties held by the Albigensians. hen asked how the heretics could e distinguished from the faithful (in der that they might be burned and oken in a fair-minded way), the ope replied, "Kill them all. God ill know his own." Whether the erated Catholics of today, and n-Catholic admirers of the present ope, like it or not, there would ave been no papacy without that irective.

Many of the radical clergy of our wn time seem almost haggard in eir effort to prove, by their own iningly political example, that larx was being unfair in dismissing eligion as the opium of the people. ity for them that their understandg of Marx is as muddled as their nderstanding of the Bible. What e said was this:

> *Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The demand to give up the illusions about its conditions is the demand to give up a condition that needs illusions. Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that men will wear the chain without any fantasy or consolation but so that they will break the chain and cull the living flower.* (Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right)

What is being argued in this pasage is *not* that religious enthusiasts nd prophets are dope peddlers. That is the universal vulgarization of Marx's opinion. What Marx neant is that there is a chord of credulity waiting to be struck in all of us. It is most likely to be struck successfully if the stroke comes concealed as an argument for moral and humane behavior.

But if you believe in religion as a reinforcement for other people's *morality*, then why not Mormonism? Or snake-handling? Or Mithras or Dagon or Zeus, or any of the thousands of defunct deities added up by H. L. Mencken? True believers always balk at this point, murmuring feebly on occasion that one has to believe in *something*. Satanism does very well by this argument. The ontological proof of Satan's existence is just as good as that of God's, and the reasons for propitiating him are, on one analysis, slightly more compelling.

So atheism strikes me as morally superior, as well as intellectually superior, to religion. Since it is obviously inconceivable that all religions can be right, the most reasonable conclusion is that they are all wrong. Does this leave us shorn of hope? Not a bit of it. Atheism, and the related conviction that we have just one life to live, is the only sure way to regard all our fellow creatures as brothers and sisters. The alleged "fatherhood" of God does not, as liberation theology has it, make this axiomatic. All it has meant, throughout history, is a foul squabble for primacy in Daddy's affections. In just the same way that any democracy is better than any dictatorship, so even the compromise of agnosticism is better than faith. It minimizes the totalitarian temptation, the witless worship of the absolute and the surrender of reason, that may have led some to saintliness but can hardly repay for the harm it has done.

We need a general "deprogramming," of the sort that even our churches endorse when the blank-eyed victim is worshiping the Reverend Moon. The desire to worship and obey is the problem—the object of adoration is a secondary issue. Professedly godless men have shown themselves capable of great crimes. But they have not invented any that they did not learn from the religious, and so they find themselves heaping up new "infallible" icons and idols. Stalinism, which was actually Stalin worship, could not have occurred in a country that had not endured several centuries of the divine right of kings. It is the religious *mentality* that has to be combated.

In pursuit of this goal, it's often necessary to be rudest to the nicest people. P. G. Wodehouse's glutinous character Madeleine Bassett believed that the stars were God's daisy chain. Bertie Wooster was too well bred to contradict her to her face, but added as an aside, "All rot, of course. They're nothing of the sort." Madeleine Bassett was a sweet and tender girl, and Mr. Charles Peters, editor of the *Washington Monthly*, is by all reports a fine fellow. In the same slushy issue of his publication that I've already mentioned, he shares with us his own deeper feelings. He tells how he used to worship President Roosevelt, and how he last turned to the Bible as a believer on that dark and dread day of April 12, 1945. Later, he surfaced from the bleak post-Roosevelt years with a new scheme. As he tells us:

> *Gradually, I began to build a new faith, one in which the love and courage and indifference to wealth of Jesus and Saint Francis were central but no more so than the humor and delight in life I found in the character of FDR and in the books that became most important for me,* Don Quixote *and* Huckleberry Finn, *and that is expressed in the great prayer "O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness."*

As William Barrett would say, "Hence the psalms." ("O be joyful" is a psalm and not a prayer.)

Is it possible that Mr. Peters, or his magazine, both devoted most of the time to exposing and combating cheap illusions, would write in that tone on any other topic? That they would permit themselves so many non sequiturs or so much sentimentality? I take leave to doubt it. Mr. Peters ends by calling for a religious revival. The awful thing is that he may well get it. Then he will be compelled, both literally and metaphorically, to say whether he believes in God or merely in religion. □



Moses Annenberg (second from left) during his trial for income-tax evasion.

Championship Social Climbing

by John Kenneth Galbraith

From the underworld to the Court of St. James's in one generation.

The Annenbergs: The Salvaging of a Tainted Dynasty, by John Cooney. Simon and Schuster. 428 pages. $18.95.

SEVERAL years ago I went to a luncheon at the American Embassy residence in London, the vast Winfield House, beside Regent's Park. Attending were former junior ministers in the British government, a journalist or two, and sundry unemployed and unemployables who, I was told, were socially prominent on the London scene. My luncheon partner was a duchess of deeply adulterous tendency of whom I had read. When the meal was over, she gave me a ride back to the center of town. Referring to the excellence of the food, wine, and other intoxicants and the vigor, if not the content, of the conversation thus stimulated, she said, "Your people do things so well. It makes for such good relations between our two countries." It did not seem worthwhile to disagree.

I could have. Affection purchased by food and alcohol has never been greatly enduring. No one of consequence alters his opinion of the United States or its policy because of these tribal rites. The people assembled that day were of no great consequence. Such entertainment owes its value to the praise of those enjoying it.

Extending such gratuity is, however, the only serious function of the American ambassador to the Court of St. James's. Any really important business is taken up directly between the president and the prime minister or otherwise between the two governments. (No one would ever have thought of according the ambassador a role of any significance in the Falkland Islands affair.) The ambassador's job is confined to making appointments for visiting officials from the United States, feeding them, and being, at best, a silent presence at their meetings with British officials. He can also make speeches, provided he confines himself to the need for good relations between the two English-speaking countries. No one wants an ambassador over in London making policy.

It is John Cooney's belief that the appointment of Walter Annenberg to this greatly celebrated sinecure by Richard Nixon in 1969 was the final step in Annenberg's rescue from, as the title of the book suggests, a deeply compromised life. This was the legacy of his father, Moses Annenberg, though through his political and personal vendettas, Walter has added a bit on his own.

Despite much unfavorable comment at the time, Walter Annenberg was wholly up to the embassy job. In both countries he was greatly ridiculed for his lapse into Haig-speak when he presented his credentials to the Queen, and he was held to be socially inadequate in other ways. This was snobbish and, quite possibly, anti-Semitic nonsense. What is interesting and important about Walter Annenberg is not this decorative finale but his earlier career as a businessman, publisher, political hard-liner, and philanthropist, and his lifelong effort to restore the reputation of his father. That is the real interest of this deeply flawed but entertaining book.

The reputation of Moses L. Annenberg, to whom his son over a lifetime remained so passionately loyal, took a good deal of restoring. From the meagerest of immigrant origins he built a major business providing up-to-the-minute information, nationwide, for horse gamblers. This monopoly and numerous

John Kenneth Galbraith is the Paul M. Warburg Professor of Economics Emeritus at Harvard University. His most recent book is A Life in Our Times *(Houghton Mifflin).*

ıer related and unrelated busi-
ıses were then sustained by tac-
s and tacticians that were far
m gentle even by the rough stan-
rds of place and time. Most of
great names of the underworld
ne, at least marginally, into Mr.
oney's story. In time, Moses
ınenberg, personal safety being a
ısideration, moved to Miami and
n to Philadelphia, in each of
ich cities he went into the news-
per business. Philadelphia, where
bought the *Inquirer*, was his un-
ing, for there he took on the New
al, FDR, and his local ally, the
blisher David Stern, under con-
ions of extreme vulnerability with
gard to his own income tax. Even-
ally, and in part to save his son
m prosecution, he pleaded guilty
some $9.5 million in tax evasion
d was sentenced to three years in
e slammer. There, after regretting
at he did not have more years to
'e to his country, he fell sick and
ıs released to die. It is this awful
emory that Walter Annenberg has
ed with over a long life and that
the central theme of this story.

SOME PARTS of the saga elic-
it considerable sympathy.
Mostly through *TV Guide*,
Walter Annenberg made a
eat deal of money, far more than
s father did. This wealth has been
e object of close attention by uni-
rsities, museums, and other man-
estations of the public good. Many
those who most wanted the mon-
least relished the name, which
d provoke controversy. After Wal-
r Annenberg had endowed the
nnenberg School of Communica-
ons at the University of Pennsyl-
ınia in memory of his father, the
vening Bulletin carried a story that
ormer friends and associates of
ıe late Al Capone are anxious to
tablish the 'Al Capone Chair of
axation' at the University of Penn-
lvania." It was a hoax and, I
ink, a nasty one. But Walter An-
enberg did not improve matters by
ıs own use and misuse of the *In-
uirer* for settling personal scores,
nd he wasn't helped by the moral
ne of some of his reporters. He
also did something—many will think much—to keep the old memories and enmities alive.

Mr. Cooney tells in detail of the politicians Walter Annenberg made and unmade, at various times supporting Joseph Clark and Richardson Dilworth in Philadelphia and at other times reducing them to subhuman stature. He dwells at length on Annenberg's personal problems and family tragedies and on the Annenberg architecture, standard of living, problems of social rejection on the Philadelphia Main Line, and acceptance in Palm Springs. All this and more.

But, alas, there are serious flaws. Mr. Cooney offers detailed information on how Walter Annenberg felt and reacted in the privacy of his home and soul at various of his many moments of crisis. But sources are not given; one yearns to know how much of the story came from Annenberg himself and how much, if any, is conjecture. Mr. Cooney is also far from being an inspired writer; among his lesser sins is a tendency to spectacularly split his infinitives. Sometimes he is worse, as when he writes that Walter Annenberg was rarely in the newsroom but, on occasion, "critiqued a layout." He pauses to tell the reader that Chiang Kai-shek was a "Chinese general, who had retreated to Formosa," and that Adlai Stevenson in 1952 was "the scholarly former [sic] Governor of Illinois." Sometimes he has trouble getting a thought under way; a chapter on Annenberg's personal life begins: "Following his divorce, Walter was at odds with himself." Earlier he remarks that "Walter needed no encouragement in pursuing the pleasurable."

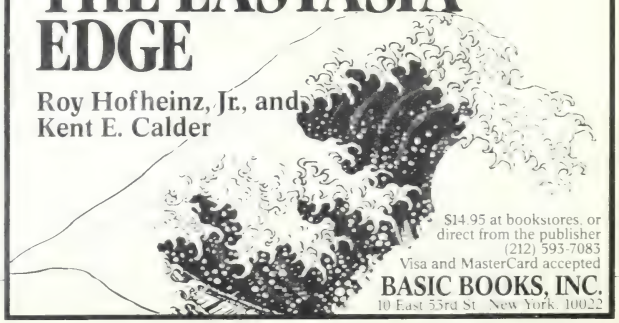
Though a bad writer, Mr. Cooney is sufficiently accomplished as a storyteller to have deserved a good editor. Messrs. Simon, Schuster, and all their housecarls should hang their heads in shame. As to Walter Annenberg's reaction, one is puzzled. Mr. Cooney does a good job of explaining him. But in so doing, he reveals how much there is still to explain. Still, no one can say his subject is lacking in interest. □

Two leading authorities probe Eastasia's challenge to the West

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POETRY

JOY

by Brian Swann

Dawn arrived: a cat
with a bird in its mouth,
stepping dark and deliberate
toward my bed. But a bird
I'd never heard anywhere before,
let alone in this city,
banged his little drum
down by the fountains
which had not yet started up
under my window.
In my head an Armenian nightingale
rose again like
smoke through water.

That day, all day, I hummed
a Hindi love song from some
Indian movie, all round town,
through the scent of the park's
new-cut grass and mayflower
in all its almost-sinister
sweetness of my childhood.
A squirrel came down his manicured tree
whiskers first, snuffled
through whatever feathery seeds
were left on the grass, and
threw himself into the air,
a whiplash, hooked salmon,
glove turned inside out.

LES NYMPHÉAS

by Margot Miller

He devised
this luminous
calligraphy's
infinite
dive and rise
fluent lilies
in the willows'
shoreless tide
the quick light
shiverings
the fiery
fishes
in his eyes.

POEM

by Theodore Enslin

Out of the years' rehearsals
I have come to you—or
tried to come—
to bridge
the differences which are
never clear.
'What is wrong?'
There are no straight answers,
as there are never any
to questions worth the asking.
Well, we have come this long path
together, and there is still
a far horizon—ways to go—
across meadows and savannahs,
thickets and woods that obscure
the going in many places.
It is a hard reach, and
we are returning, singly, I suppose,
for all the companionship
there seems to be/is not.
How will it end? any of it?
We will not know until the full tide
breaks on the shore
within this quiet room.



Kevin Bendis

You're Under Arrest, Jane Everywoman!

by James Wolcott

Why do radicals wear red suspenders?

IN THE early weeks of April, the bulletin boards and wall murals of lower Manhattan were blighted with flyers featuring a photograph of President Reagan chortling next to a mock tabloid headline that boomed F— 'EM IF THEY CAN'T TAKE A JOKE! Just as Holden Caulfield wanted to rub F— YOU from sister Phoebe's schoolhouse wall, I felt like pulling down a few of these posters, if only to lower the visual decibel level. But what the flyer was announcing had an intriguing hook. From April 22 to 24, New York University would host the first Festival of Radical Humor, an ambitious wingding consisting of comedy workshops, cabaret performances, panel discussions, video displays, and art exhibits, all of this buzz and bother dedicated to the purpose of giving the ruling class an incapacitating smack in the chops. Questions bubbled to the surface. Not only is comedy a difficult subject to pin down (analyzing humor nearly always turns sunbeam whimsies gray and ponderous), but "radical humor" sounds like one of those confused mongrels that doesn't know whether to nuzzle or bark. And what sort of radicals were the organizers trying to lure? Marxists? Anarchists? Lesbian vegetarian separatists? The distinctions matter: Marxist-Leninist states, after all, are hardly known as "fun" places hospitable to all forms of swinging impudence. *Take my kulaks—please.* Indeed, lefties often take on that far-seeking fanatical glow about the brow that makes the witticisms of those around them seem like so many idle bits of trash carried away with the breeze. In the 1960s, left-wing visionaries, confronted by what they considered to be frivolous expressions of mirth, would fix their adversary with a look of disdain and unleash that deathly quotation from Bertolt Brecht: "He who laughs has not heard the terrible news." And the poor nittering offender would slink off to his mousehole, shamed by his presumption. Had this stern left-wing stoniness softened into a welcoming embrace? Like Lowell Thomas in search of adventure, I donned shades and safari jacket and threaded my way through the treacherous wilds of NYU.

As soon as I descended the steps of Schimmel Auditorium, a chill of foreboding began to creep up my legs. No matter how snappy and controversial a symposium promises to be, it's invariably held in an auditorium that proves to be a vault of dead air and washed-out fluorescent light. The festival's opening panel was entitled "Radical Humor: What Are the Questions?", and those poised behind the mikes to serve and volley included Paul Krassner, editor of the satirical sheet *The Realist* and (for a brief but turbulent spell) *Hustler*, veteran activist Flo Kennedy, and comedienne Robin Tyler, who advertises herself with the motto "I'm not gay, I'm lesbian

Beginning next month, James Wolcott will be writing a monthly literary column for Harper's.

and festive!" Krassner, an impish provocateur in a brown baseball jacket, is a funny stand-up performer, but he's still feeding off his antics from the Sixties—here, he regaled listeners once again with the story of how he fabricated the infamous anecdotes in the *Realist* about Lyndon Johnson having sex with John F. Kennedy's corpse on the flight back from Dallas. Pretty crass stuff to build a reputation on—but crasser still to be *boastful* about such a shenanigan two decades later.

But then much of the Radical Humor Festival seemed stranded on the beachhead of countercultural nostalgia. Aaron Kaye, a prankster of unsightly heft whose specialty is flinging pies at public officials, took the microphone by the throat as if fearful someone would wrestle it from his grasp and saluted the good old days when "Jerry and Abbie" sent Wall Street into a tizzy by showering the Stock Exchange with make-believe money. The angry rhetoric also took one back. Certainly it's been many a sip over the brim since I've heard those in authority referred to as "the white male corporate power structure" (Robin Tyler) and, less politely, "the pigs" (Flo Kennedy).

If Tyler and Kennedy agreed on who the enemy was, in nearly every other respect they were waywardly out of synch. Tyler, who fancies herself as a scourge of society's hypocrisies in the renegade tradition of Lenny Bruce, hailed Richard Pryor as the most radically adventurous comedian of our time. Brilliant as Pryor is, however, the fact is that a man who habitually pigged out on cocaine and nearly turned himself into a crispy critter while freebasing is hardly a dependable soldier in the struggle. (Richard Pryor is the comic equivalent of the rock star whose reckless high living is tolerated, even esteemed, because he manages to hit all the right low-gritty notes.) Tyler—more sensibly—also commended Pryor for abandoning the shock word "nigger" in his recent act, a lesson lost on fellow panelist Flo Kennedy. Kennedy, a black feminist agitator given to cowboy hats and boots, has a flair for tart sarcasm—she's usually the one credited with the line "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle"—but over the years her needle has slipped into a deep, tired groove. Ignoring Tyler's remarks on Pryor, Kennedy rumbled into a well-worn tirade about how life in these here United States is a series of niggerizations. The schools, she said, "niggerize" us, the churches "niggerize" us, the police and the federal government "niggerize" us, the . . . —by the time she got to the fifth "niggerize," I was swiftly up the steps and out into the night, where the cool air seemed bracing and sane.

On evening two of the festival, the event's true ideological thrust began to sharpen. In a panel on "The Political Function of Radical Humor," Bertell Ollman, a Marxist professor whose chief stake to fame is as the brain wave behind the board game Class Struggle, sketched out the three categories of political humor for our elucidation. *Reactionary humor*, he argued, is put-down humor that blames the victim for his feeble condition and reinforces demeaning stereotypes; reactionary humor tends to be antiwoman, antiblack, anti-insurgent, and anti-Semitic. (For some reason, Ollman neglected to mention that the great lord and master Karl Marx, himself of Jewish ancestry, wasn't above using anti-Semitism to raise a grinning smirk. In an attack on the Jewish publisher of the London *Daily Telegraph*, Joseph Moses Levy, Marx sneered that "Mother Nature has inscribed, with the wildest black letters, his family tree in the middle of his face. . . ." *Status quo humor* is humor that denies any possibility of improving the lot of the masses; it's humor laced with chic, laid-back, upscale alienation, in the Woody Allen manner. *Radical humor*, however, is the real thing—it exposes the corrupt underpinnings of power, brings the scattered downtrodden together with shared laughter, and offers the hope of deep and liberating change. Radical humo Ollman suggested, can be used t instruct the uninformed about th true nature of their oppression, an by way of illustration he describe a cartoon in which a Fat Cat Cap italist is sitting in a hammock, on side attached to a tree, the othe side attached to a standing worke "Can you believe it?" says the Cap italist to the worker, "the socialist want to cut down our tree!" Mean ing: though the Fat Cat Capitalis lives off the worker's labor, he keep the worker in place by pretendin they have a shared fate.

Needless to say, this didn't pro duce a sidesplitting riot in the au ditorium. Barbara Ehrenreich. writer-activist with an understated deadpan delivery, made a more per suasive point about political humo —the best thing about it, she said is not that it sugarcoats a bitter les son but that it helps break down th barriers of fear and lonesomenes between people. When someone i the audience laughs at a joke abou ketchup being made a vegetable, and *hears other people laughing*, he re alizes that his responses to Reagan omics aren't eccentric or isolated— that other people, too, know some thing is ludicrously amiss. Unfortu nately, none of the panelists dis cussed the boundaries of taste and tactics in such humor. For example, at what point does savaging a poli tician exceed the permissible? Is it really "radical" to turn the assas sination of JFK into a sick prank, or to talk about Ronald Reagan as if he weren't a person of blood and feeling but simply an old hunk of splintering bark? Unlike anarchist Tory wits like Auberon Waugh and his colleagues at London's *Private Eye*, who take great glee in letting fly at feminists, homosexuals, trade unionists, and other assorted pseuds and humbugs, the comics at the Radical Humor Festival took anxious care not to offend any of the left's fragmented constituencies—cracking a joke about the grim excesses of, say, Women Against Pornography would have been considered a divisive act of blaming-the-victim. But when it came to expressing feelings of *personal* ugliness,

one felt compelled to quiver his rows.

An incident that brought all this iddle together in my mind was obin Tyler's mild chastising of ul Krassner for telling an "agist" ke about Ronald Reagan's alleged ability to get it up. What made ler's chiding bizarre was the fact at she herself had tossed off a joke out the attempted assassination of agan, saying that she was trying raise money to send John W. nckley, Jr., to marksman school. other words: it's okay to wish esident Reagan dead, but not to ake fun of him for being old.

THE FESTIVAL wasn't all discourse and lint-picking tedium. On Friday, April 23, the festival sponsored a erformance night" at Washington ving High School in which all rts of oldies but goodies tramped ross the boards to entertain the raggling survivors of Norman ailer's armies of the night—who oked like the amiable beasties of d Koren's cartoons, bulging figures ith vast, unruly outcroppings of izzed vegetation. Tuli Kupferberg, Beat-inspired lyricist who achieved nderground fame with the Fugs, cited an ode to a hippie, had a irited mock at the Falklands crisis 'Falk, falk, falk, the Falkland Isnds . . ."), and did an ironic salute the bliss of celibacy. Also on the rogram were the ubiquitous Robin yler, who mimed inserting her feet stirrups to demonstrate what it's ke to go to the gynecologist, and troupe of people in khaki uniforms ho strummed whimsical protest ongs. When a black dude lugging a adio did a rasping, rambling monogue for what seemed like an ice ge, I snuck out to knock back a ouple of cream sodas, and when I eturned, nearly a fourth of the audience was buzzing about in the obby like a host of idle drones aiting for their next assignment in he hive.

Then came a moment that rought fiasco to the proceedings nd cast a pall over the entire festival. An all-woman ensemble named Spiderwoman Theater took the stage with a gypsy whoop and spangle. Grimacing and leering behind thick, gargoylish makeup, the Spiderwomen wore ragtag costumes that looked as if they had been pinched from unattended dryers at an East Village laundromat. All the clomping tumult and blowsy gusts of color were a relief after the monochromatic diddlings of the previous acts, but hope soon turned to disgruntlement as it became clear that Spiderwoman Theater was one of those avant-garde troupes so far out on the surreal fringe that they were broadcasting on a dim, weird frequency capable of being picked up only by the fanatical few. Not only could you not understand the point of their neo-Brechtian skits, but you couldn't *hear* half of what was piping out of their busy little mouths. And what little you could hear was a fright. In—presumably—a parody of the sort of blaming-the-victim jokes those in the white-male-corporate-power-structure like to tell, one Spiderwoman asked another Spiderwoman why Puerto Ricans liked to wear pointy shoes, and the answer came back: "So that they can kill cockroaches in corners." Uneasy titters greeted this punch line, and you could feel the audience beginning to squirm in rebellion. One Spiderwoman then asked another Spiderwoman what the difference was between a Jew and a pizza. I don't know, came the reply in vaudevillian tempo, what *is* the difference between a Jew and a pizza? The answer: "A pizza doesn't scream when you put it in the oven."

That tore it. "Get *off*!" boomed a voice in the audience, and a chorus of hisses rained down in a sudden cloudburst. As Spiderwoman refused to surrender the stage, the troupe came under a bombardment of boos and hisses, a volleying attack they returned by making stiff "up-yours" gestures to their indignant hecklers. Perhaps Spiderwoman Theater was trying to argue in its sketch that so-called innocent ethnic humor inevitably leads to rancid Jew-baiting, but whatever their purpose, they lost the crowd and the evening turned into a rancorous shambles.

THE NEXT DAY, not surprisingly, was anticlimax. As frisbees wafted through the air at Washington Square Park and unescorted dogs soiled its paths, those still in search of radical humor converged on NYU's nearby Loeb Student Center, where the makeshift "Club Rockefeller" was presenting a stream of poets, folkies, illusionists, stand-up comics, piano tinklers, and other assorted amateurs and deadbeats. Except for one very funny takeoff of a sanctimonious evangelical show, the performers were a sorry lot. For me, the didactic silliness of the whole enterprise was crystallized in a skit by a group known as No More Nice Girls, on the nightmarish ramifications of the Hyde Amendment. As a song called "Sex Cops" blared from a tape, women in blue police

Negligible Literary Anecdotes No. 4



by John Morressy

At an otherwise dull dinner party, Henry James overheard a scrap of conversation that fascinated him. He thought about it on his way home, and went to sleep convinced that it held the germ of a poignant story.

The next morning, it did not seem as good. He decided instead to write *The Ambassadors*.

uniforms burst into the bedroom of a drowsy single in a bathrobe, who had committed the crime of sleeping with men and using contraceptives. Pointing an accusing finger, one of the sex cops announced, "You're under arrest, Jane Everywoman!" The woman pointing the finger was someone I recognized—a copy editor at the *Village Voice*. Sheesh, how embarrassing . . .

Two weeks later, the *Voice* carried a cautiously upbeat report on the festival. (What a cowinkadinky.)

For me, the First Radical Humor Festival represented the last wheezing gasp of the countercultural left. Certainly the opportunities are there for a flaring-up of radical humor. Reagan's social-service cuts and the blossoming of the nuclear freeze movement have reawakened the liberal left and helped create an audience potentially responsive to ridicule of the boobies in command. And the slick media hipness of most television comedy—of comics like Robin Williams and David Letterman (whose minds seem composed of dancing ionized dots)—has, I think, made people hungry for humor with more of a bite of malice and conviction. But the unbuttoned, untucked humor of this festival isn't the answer; it's only for the already convinced—for people who still get off on hating Nixon. As the first Radical Humor Festival folded up its tents, it occurred to me that the only felicitous thing about the whole affair was that at least we were spared the sight of Abbie Hoffman and his pestering mug butting in to tell us how important he was to the Sixties.

A thought soon dashed. As I was leaving the Club Rockefeller, I spotted a flyer announcing a forthcoming lecture appearance by Abbie Hoffman at NYU. Sigh, groan. Abbie Hoffman and most of the entertainers at the Radical Humor fest are like the disinterred mummies in cheapie horror films. They stagger through dusty corridors, blind and slow and feeble, and yet there's no escaping them, they're relentless, they pursue you with their bandaged outstretched hands . . . □



The End of the Line

by Frances Taliaferro

What happened when a young rich girl met Andy Warho

Edie: An American Biography, by Jean Stein, edited with George Plimpton. Alfred A. Knopf, 335 pages. $16.95.

THE Sargent portrait of Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes, painted in 1897, hangs in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum. The first impression is one of easy assurance and casual power. We view the Stokeses from an angle somewhat below, so that they seem superciliously tall, slender, and strong. They are also noticeably well laundered, he in his flannels and she in her long, energetic white skir Mrs. Stokes dominates the portra With complexion unblemished ar teeth uncarious, she looks as if sh had lived forever on a diet of gree vegetables and lean meat; as she could play brilliant tennis an speak fluent French; as if she ha never known uncertainty, fear, pai or desire. We know the two are hus band and wife, but they might jus as well be brother and sister: Bos ton Ptolemies or Newport hierarchs clean-limbed guardians of the sacre flame of American aristocracy. The

Frances Taliaferro teaches at The Brear ley School.

: not lovable, but they are envi-
le and perhaps admirable. We
all not look upon their like again.
The handsome Stokeses are the
iblem of a class and a way of life.
e know these privileged people
ough Sargent's portraits and Wins-
v Homer's informal scenes of
:wport. We have met them in
lith Wharton's novels, where civil-
is minutely regulated and the
mortal soul may be set at peril
a faux pas. If this were not
nerica, we might feel comfortable
eaking of them as aristocrats; as
is, we compromise by alluding to
ld families" and "old money," by
irking at tales of eccentric Boston
id feudal Philadelphia. An aristo-
atic tradition has its consolations,
it as democrats we cannot quite
)prove. We yearn, but only skepti-
illy, for a long Jamesian pedigree;
ir more natural hero is the parvenu
ıy Gatsby.

Jean Stein's remarkable book,
die: An American Biography, is
work of "nonfiction" that reads
some respects like a classic novel.
begins with the portrait of a dis-
nguished family, the Sedgwicks,
id follows them through a familiar
)cial rhythm. According to this pat-
rn the family tradition, established
y ancestors of high energy and un-
npeachable virtue, is devalued by
ıcceeding generations: energy dis-
pates, virtue degenerates, and the
urrent generation become casual-
es rather than masters of their cul-
ıre.

This well-worn plot will come as
o surprise to readers of novels and
iographies; proud families go to
eed as easily in fact as in fiction.
n *Edie*, the difference begins with
ne central character: Edie Sedgwick
1943–1971), who—if she is re-
nembered at all—is remembered as
"superstar" of the Andy Warhol
ilms of the 1960s. Edie herself had
nuch style but little substance. The
ascination of her biography is in
he range and vitality of its social
)ortraits, and in Jean Stein's deci-
ion to let Edie Sedgwick's family,
riends, and hangers-on speak with
heir own voices. *Edie* is not a con-
ventional third-person biography
but an oral history, a montage of spoken memoirs, a mixed-media portrait caused by the life and death of Edie Sedgwick, but looking toward a larger and even sadder subject: America laid waste in the 1960s.

THE Sedgwicks are an old New England family. Stockbridge, Massachusetts, is their fiefdom. All the male Sedgwicks have been educated at Groton and Harvard. Edie's great-uncle, Ellery Sedgwick, was for many years the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*; her uncle, Minturn Sedgwick, was a legendary Harvard football player. Her grandfather, Henry Dwight Sedgwick, was a writer of history and biography: a great romantic, a guardian of decorum, an incomparably cultivated man who would "read Cicero, or Ovid, or Virgil, and laugh away as if it were some modern novel." His book *In Praise of Gentlemen* (1935) is an elegant, suffocating little exposition of his class's ethos.



Metropolitan Museum of Art
John Singer Sargent: Mr. & Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes.

Francis Sedgwick, Edie's father, was known to the world as "Duke" and to his family as "Fuzzy," an oddly lovable nickname for a man who was perceived as "a cross between Mr. America and General Patton," "a sort of Olympian figure," a "great stallion," "a real Don Giovanni." Insofar as he had a profession, Fuzzy was a sculptor, tending to large equestrian works. Saucie Sedgwick, Edie's sister, remembers that a cousin once went to Fuzzy's studio "and discovered my father in a G-string strapped to a huge cross, staring at himself in a full-length mirror. He explained that he was doing a crucifixion scene and didn't want to be bothered to pay a model. Typical of my father to see himself as a combination of Messiah, victim, and great male nude." (This and all other remarks quoted are taken from the interviews in *Edie*.)

During World War II, Fuzzy moved his family to Santa Barbara, California, where he raised cattle and lived a seignorial life, especially after oil was discovered in his duchy. Fuzzy, with his "priapic, almost strutting bearing," ruled a little world at once earthy and artificial, raffish and cultivated. At the ranch, where Sedgwick land stretched from horizon to horizon and Sedgwick children were educated in their own schoolhouse, Edie "grew up with a total lack of boundaries, a total lack of a sense of scale about herself." Her sister Suky remembers the ranch as Xanadu, and one of Edie's lovers would comment years later that Edie "seemed only to exist freely in atmospheres that were removed or enchanted."

There was a streak of *Wuthering Heights* in more than one Sedgwick child: a fascination with violence and excess, an inability to cope with the life beyond the ranch, a sense of family doom. Two brothers committed suicide. Edie was, almost predictably, anorexic and bulimic. In the Sedgwick world of Gothic extravagance and patrician manners, she could call attention to herself with her own imperious excesses: "eating and stuffing and stuffing and eating and then throw-

ing up." For most of her adult life she was terribly thin; she was also amazingly, mercurially, enchantingly beautiful.

"Being Edie, she didn't want to be possessed by anybody, in any shape or form. Just like a fish, zoom, zoom, zoom, escaping in a lot of ways. And amusing herself in the limelight." Her first "scene" was Cambridge in 1963, "when there were a lot of fairly bright and beautiful people . . . going downhill as fast as they could." Edie was the ornament of the Cambridge demimonde, on the fringes of Harvard: "She wanted high, very sophisticated, brilliant faggot friends who posed no threat to her body. That was a golden period, that year in Cambridge. All those amazing faggots and Edie . . . the prettiest girl in town and the most degenerate men!" But Cambridge was too small for one who "liked walking very close to extinction," who "was always, like, pushing everything to the limit." New York, then, was her destiny.

Edie had the gift of timing; she was the girl of the hour, the girl of the year, who could appear and dazzle a party at the exact psychological moment. Her arrival in New York coincided with the destruction of all the social conventions that had governed the complacent 1950s.

> *People were going to start shooting up in the bathroom. Freaks were going to become sought after. Overnight you could become famous for having big hair or short skirts or a neon bra. . . . The wild stuff began coming out of the woodwork.*

Not surprisingly, Edie found her way to Andy Warhol and the Factory.

THE LOFT known as the Factory was not only the place where Andy Warhol made his films; it was a sort of noctambulist Versailles, adrift with courtiers of the counterculture, all hoping to be noticed by Warhol. "Everyone around him was ravaged on drugs, though I never saw Andy smoke a joint." Warhol, "the ultimate instigator," was "like the Marquis de Sade in the sense that his very presence was a releasing agent which released people so they could live out their fantasies." Edie had always behaved like a princess, no matter what the milieu; now Warhol decreed her a "superstar." He had recognized her "amazing sort of essential flame"; now "he was able to make her more Edie so that when he got it on camera it would be made available to everybody."

Images of Edie flicker before us. Edie and Andy Warhol dressed as twins, with striped T-shirts and silver hair, "riding, riding, riding the wild surf of New York society." Edie moving "like a Japanese Noh dancer—very dreamlike and slow." Edie with a broken knee at a twist party, "doing the most violent, deliberate kind of twist wearing a hip cast." Edie and Andy receiving the homage of a crowd outside the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia—"Edie and Andy! Edie and Andy!" Edie getting her "vitamin shot" from cheerful, spacey Dr. Roberts. ("Maybe it was cocaine. Sometimes he would shoot you with LSD. You never knew what he was going to shoot you with.") Edie at home with Ondine, her male "French maid," breakfasting on amphetamines and throwing the I Ching. Edie being photographed for *Vogue*, a nymphet who "suggested springtime and freshness. . . . Lovely skin, but then I've never seen anyone on drugs that didn't have wonderful skin." Edie in every kind of bed: she had "a particular smell that came out in lovemaking . . . a sweet but somewhat sickly smell, like orchids."

And now Edie the "drug geisha," Edie and Tuinal, Placidyl, Seconal and vodka, Quaaludes, heroin, sodium pentothal. Edie living on amphetamines and chocolate milkshakes. Edie flipping out, Edie shooting acid with a kindly gynecologist, Edie hallucinating, Edie in and out of mental hospitals, Edie setting her apartment and her hotel room on fire, Edie in a coma and declared dead, Edie alive but unable to walk or talk, her brain lik Swiss cheese. Edie, recovered, han ing out with a motorcycle gan hoping to be taken for a "bik chick" but still acting the princes ("It was really ludicrous, becau she'd ball half the dudes in town f a snort of junk.") Then, surprisin ly, Edie married, radiant but mott like, birdlike, fragile. And Edie suc denly dead in her sleep, her your husband frantic, Edie suffocate Edie dead.

It's hard to weep for Edie; th terrible sadness of this book ha very little to do with her. As th current saying goes, you probabl "had to be there" at the time; now almost two decades later, it seem almost impossible to capture Edie' magic, which was at best ephem eral. At the heart of the book i an unwholesome emptiness. In thi connection Jean Stein's format tan talizes the reader. The editing is skill ful and the montage is incompar ably interesting, but one sometime wishes for a biographer's steadyin voice speaking in some moral con text. To feel this need is, however to miss the point of *Edie* and to in dulge in an easy longing for coher ence.

Edie's 1960s were not everyone's Most noticeably, she was entirel apolitical: in her brief queenshi she ruled the nightmare province of art and fashion, her emotiona wardrobe a collection of fantasie worn indecently inside out, her nar row parish inhabited by appetite gone morbid. Born an American princess, she might have inherite the identity that Sargent's portraits depict with such ironic vigor. In stead she ravaged that vigor and became the icon of that irony. As Robert Rauschenberg comments, in her heyday "she was like art. I mean, she was an object that had been very strongly, effectively creat ed." But another artist of the pe riod, George Segal, has the last word: like Warhol's Marilyn Mon roe, Edie is the image of "a double obsession with style [and] beauty on the same extraordinary level to be admired with death and negation." Edie's "American biography" is a memento mori. □

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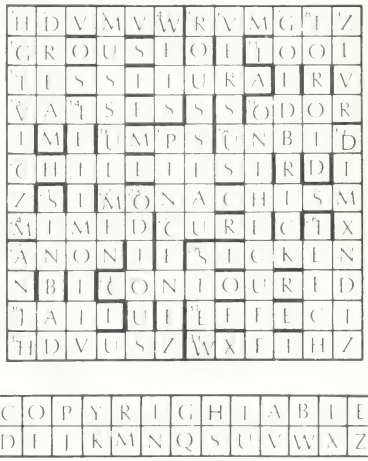


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Solution to the June Puzzle Notes for "Code 13"

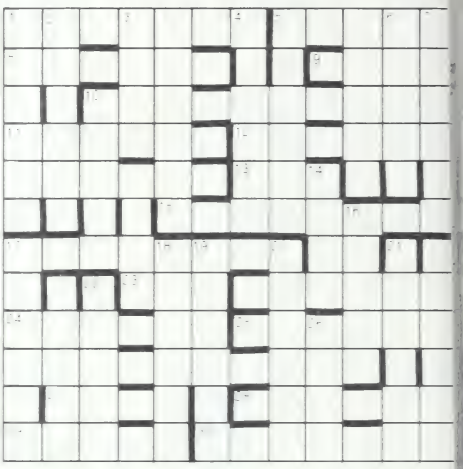


Across: 1. scarab, anagram; 5. Mar(tini)que; 10. grouse, two meanings; 11. too-L; 12. tessitura, reversal of a-rut-is-set; 13. val(I)ses; 15. O-d'or; 16. (p)umps; 18. unbid, anagram; 20. ch(ill-I)est; 22. mona(R)chism; 24. mi(me)d; 25. cure, two meanings; 27. (c)anon(s); 28. sicken, anagram; 29. con-toured; 30. J-ail; 31. eF(reversal)-Fe-c(oa)t; 32. scat-he; 33. B-louse. **Down:** 1. s(Q)uander, anagram; 2. D-ream; 3. Mussulmen, homonym; 4. we(igh)ts; 5. (t)rousseau; 6. V-ersus(anagram); 7. goldbrick, two meanings; 8. toroid, anagram; 9. exam, reversal of m(ilitary)-axe; 14. leitmotiv, anagram of movie titl(e); 15. on the cuff, cf. off the cuff; 17. p(R)ince-neZ(reversal); 19. cur-L-l-cue; 21. si(reversal)-nbad(anagram); 23. (Mel)odious; 26. lee-ch; 27. VI-PS; 28. stew, reversal of 4D.

PUZZLE

What's My Line?

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.



This month's instructions:

Each of the six unclued Across entries—some of them uncommon words—is related in the same way to one of the six unclued Down entries.

Clue answers include one common foreign word and two proper nouns. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.

CLUES

ACROSS

5. Shady place for violinist? (5)
8. Clarify tax again? (6)
9. Start to whip Roman statesman (4)
11. Most of the range is flowered (6)
12. You stopped short after horrible roar in gully (6)
13. Goodly amount of beer—kilo, for example (3)
15. Finishes visit the wrong way, embraced by females (8)
23. What to call any boat with half-sails (3)
24. Boy, one who's thrifty takes in the last of cash (6)
25. Darlene's heartless and bizarre charm (6)
27. Contentment found in the middle of two seas (4)
28. Chicken or canary (6)
29. Art is trashed up (5)
30. Inroads maneuvered by early Greeks (7)

DOWN

1. Candle: routine church prop (6)
2. In a frenzy, he trod on fire (3-3)
3. Hail in Rome and outskirts of Capri and Anzio (4)
4. Get up again, possibly weaker (6)
6. It's a gas, hearing one of the great musical comedy stars (5)
7. Rubbish or small machine parts (6)
10. Wife, by repetition, is composed (5)
14. Stuff left in the belly (4)
16. Blare out more Handy . . . (5)
17. . . . if ASCAP, without piano, reorganizes colorful band (6)
18. Careful eater needs water pitcher after heart of artichokes (6)
19. Announce the lady and a lord, briefly (6)
20. He regrets embracing Ann without a cover for the chest (6)
21. A churchman is necessary to persuade a convert (6)
22. Small vehicle holds a little weight (5)
26. Shop that makes this very delivery (4)

CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to What's My Line?, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by July 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the August issue. Winners' names will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the May puzzle, "Multiple Choice," are Richard Betz, Weaverville, North Carolina; A. V. McLees, Saint Albans, New York; and Scott Mouser, Fort Knox, Kentucky.



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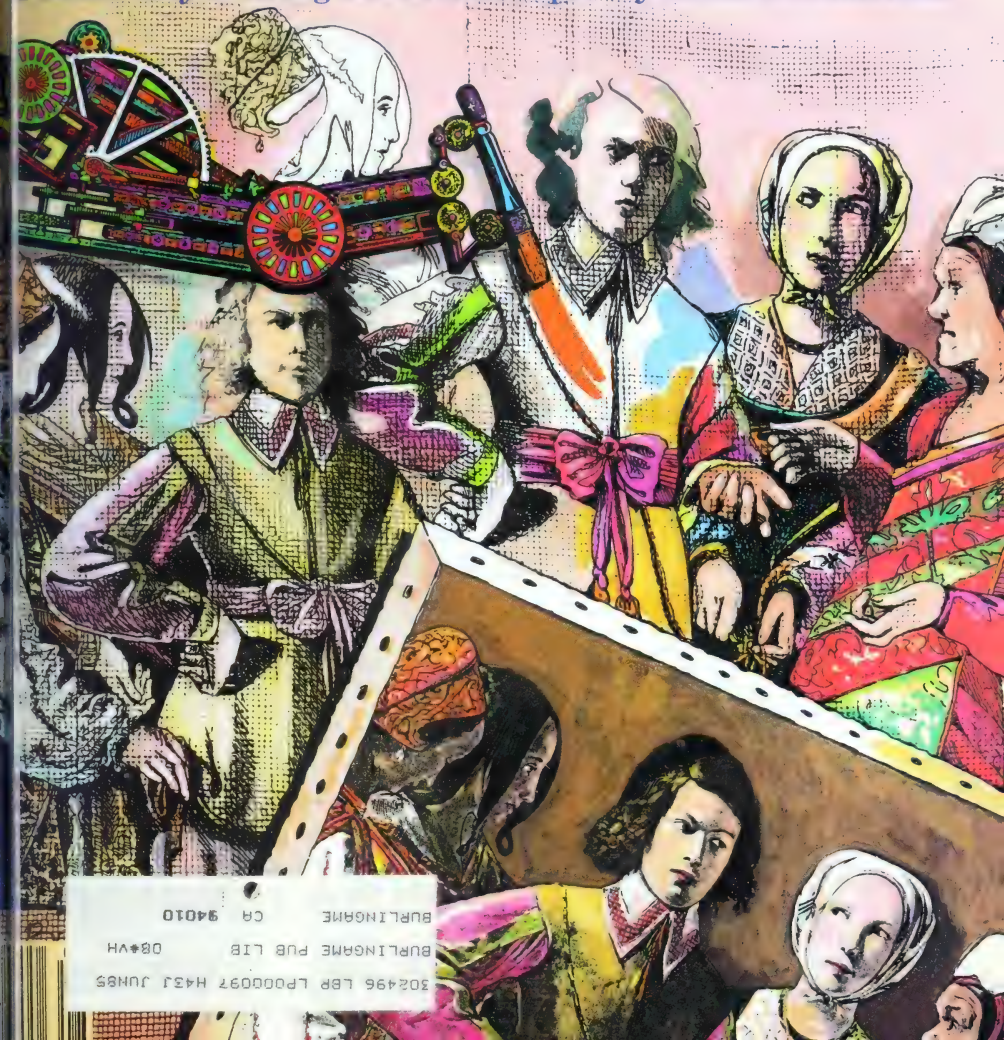
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Pruning the Paper Pile

There's a commercial on TV plugging the services of an air express company. It shows an office worker being swept along a corridor by an avalanche of paper as his co-workers duck into their cubicles to avoid being bowled over by the onrushing mass.

The commercial is intended to dramatize the problem of coping with the pileup of paper in a modern business office. (No small problem, we can aver.) Such an inundation, however, is as nothing compared to the load of paperwork the federal government heaps on businesses large and small, state and local governments, and everyday citizens — at substantial cost to all.

Forms, forms everywhere. Ah, but there's good news today. The paper pile is being pruned.

The battle against federal paperwork is being waged under terms of the Paperwork Reduction Act. The law was enacted during the Carter Administration and is now being implemented and enforced by the Reagan Administration. Spearheading the battle is the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. From the front lines along the Potomac, OMB reports ground gained.

Last year federal paperwork was slashed 13%, or by nearly 200 million of what OMB calls "burden hours"... a "burden hour" being one hour's paperwork by one person. The cutback is equivalent to 95,000 work-years. It amounts to over one hour saved for every man and woman in the U.S., OMB notes.

The trimming reflects some good old-fashioned horse sense:

- a revision of program-logging rules for radio stations, the rules having been issued originally to monitor program content;
- adoption of a common medical claim form for use by Medicare, Medicaid, and insurance companies;
- cutting back to a single page a multi-page quarterly tax form issued by the Internal Revenue Service for use by employers;
- revising the requirements for truck drivers' daily logs and exempting certain drivers from the logging requirement.

With the consolidation of 57 federal grant programs into nine new block grants, the required paperwork will be reduced this year by 83%, or 5.4 million work hours.

Further cuts in paperwork will be tougher to make. That's because so much of it is linked to deeply entrenched procedures and programs. In some cases, new legislation will be required to ease the load.

OMB's paper-cutters are making heartening headway. Let's hope they'll carry on the fight against governmental paper flow with redoubled zeal.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

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Capitalism Observed: MAKE MINE MOINK Jim Quinn 18
The secrets of modern restaurant management.

The Fourth Estate: THE TEDIUM TWINS Alexander Cockburn 24
Tonight: should MacNeil and Lehrer be crucified? Back to you, Robin.

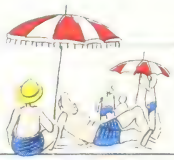
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are very welcome, especially if they are short and typed double-spaced. We enjoy hearing from readers, even though volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

LETTERS



Almighty bucks

In Steve Salerno's article "All This and Heaven Too" [*Harper's*, June], Salerno mentions ten archbishops and cardinals. Actually, he interviewed one. Five are dead. He led off with a Richard Cardinal Cushing story from 1961, and commented heavily on the activities of Francis Cardinal Spellman more than two decades ago.

Having exhausted his tepid interview with Archbishop Borders of Baltimore, Salerno concluded his examination of cardinals by listing the sins of two garden-variety priests: Guido Carcich, indicted for misappropriation of $2 million in mission funds; and Lorenzo Zorza, a Vatican priest assigned to the United Nations, accused of smuggling stolen art. Salerno says these may seem to be isolated incidents. They certainly do.

ROBERT H. FEENEY
Littleton, Colo.

According to the *Official Catholic Directory*, there were 58,845 Catholic clergy in the U.S. in the year 1981. Of this total, Steve Salerno attempts to blacken the reputation of all priests by citing *four* as criminals, two of whom were never indicted, much less convicted of any crime. I challenge you to compare the figures I cite with those for any other professional group in this country to see where there is true venality.

If you are so desperate to sell your periodical that you must deliberately demean clergymen of the Catholic faith, your periodical deserves to die.

SISTER MARGUERITA SMITH
Yonkers, N.Y.

Steve Salerno's article seems to be the result of careless thinking concerning the character and purpose of the Catholic Church.

It may be true, as he wrote, that a prelate can embezzle or waste the donations of his parishioners, but this is the worst that he can do. The Church lacks the power of a state to imprison, to confiscate property, or to levy taxes. Democracy cannot prevent the activities of a determined and inconspicuous embezzler, and democratic methods in the Church could be inefficient and costly without decreasing the opportunity for dishonesty.

If the hierarchy is to maintain its doctrinal freedom, it must have the financial freedom to implement any projects inspired by its beliefs, even when these beliefs are unpopular. Comparisons at this point with secular government will only mislead.

The purpose of democratic government is to execute the will of the people, and so it is reasonable to suppose that laws should be passed in accordance with the will of the

majority. However, what is true of laws is quite false of ethical judgments, for it is absurd to think that some value can become morally right just because a majority of those living in a particular society have taken a fancy to it.

C. L. MILLER
Pittsburgh, Pa.

I cannot recall when I have enjoyed an article more than Steve Salerno's on the finances of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, for its sheer lack of rancor.

FR. WINSTON F. JENSEN
Superior, Wis.

Fiction fans

Thank you for Lewis Nordan's brilliant story "Sugar Among the Freaks" [*Harper's*, June].

I love the sliced spaghetti and the crazy grandma and Jimmy Fish (may he live forever) and the writer who made these bizarre events and people suddenly appear. What a sleight-of-hand man. I swear I could see them all for a minute. Wow.

MARTHA HEIMBERG
Dallas, Tex.

I have just discovered the precious, glowing piece of literature you placed inconspicuously between the pages of the June issue of *Harper's*. I hope Lewis Nordan's future work will again find its way into your pages. I will be here, braced, waiting to marvel (and enjoy).

D. BIGGS
McKinney, Tex.

I can't believe it. Lewis Nordan works at writing, or he couldn't pull off the lines he does.

Well, this is a fan letter. Three times *Harper's* fiction has made me cheer. I thought Nordan wasn't going to be able to bring it off, but he did, and it was wonderful.

FLOSSIE LEWIS
San Francisco, Calif.

High praise for Lewis Nordan's "Sugar Among the Freaks," a hilarious, sensitive, and insightful glimpse into my own soul. I can only hope we see more of Nordan's work in the pages of *Harper's* soon.

ROBERT K. KAYNOR
Dorchester, Mass.

Harper's "does not publish unsolicited fiction." I would like to suggest that, were you to abandon this policy, the laws of chance would guarantee that the very first piece of unsolicited fiction that came in over your transom would be better than "Sugar Among the Freaks," by Lewis Nordan.

This "story" has no plot, and the thoughts expressed range from those that are merely in poor taste to those that are offensive or even repulsive. I cannot understand what possessed you to print it.

FLETCHER EATON
Needham, Mass.

The harder they come

My own experience with West Indians and native American blacks in Brooklyn suggests an important difference between them that James Traub ["You Can Get It If You Really Want," *Harper's*, June] overlooked and that might at least modify any contention that "values" are paramount in determining West Indian success.

West Indians here, like all voluntary immigrants, are a *self-selected* subgroup of their people, a subgroup whose members took the initiative to leave familiar homelands to struggle by wits and hard work in a strange country. It is a choice that American blacks as a group were denied, though a certain proportion of them, too, exhibit the same wits and hard work, something one might not gather from Mr. Traub's regrettable inclination to concentrate them all in Brownsville while ignoring the nearby but stable homeowning communities in Bedford-Stuyvesant, east Bushwick, and along Linden Boulevard.

Similarly, those Hispanics in Brooklyn, such as Dominicans, Ecuadoreans, and others who chose to come here tend to work long hours, buy property, and succeed much as West Indians do. Puerto Ricans, who were simply annexed as a people by the United States, have the same high incidence of welfare dependency and family disintegration as American blacks.

Put bluntly, populations that have been incorporated wholesale and involuntarily into this country seem more likely to have members in trouble today than do voluntary immigrant populations of whatever race. I don't say this "excuses" American blacks or Puerto Ricans from an obligation to overcome our continuing discrimination; but I do think the stark facts of American history, which rather brutally precluded free choice by these two groups even as it disrupted their cultural development, cannot be glossed over by vague (and inevitably self-congratulatory) references to differences in cultural "values."

JIM SLEEPER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

The perpetration of racist propaganda comes in many forms. The latest is transmitted through *Harper's* with a deceitfully camouflaged article entitled "You Can Get It If You Really Want," by James Traub. It is sorely lacking in an understanding of socioeconomic relationships. To assume that black West Indians and native black Americans ought to be comparable in their ability to negotiate the American system is to miss the point entirely. Like all immigrants, American West In-

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MED HELP OVERSEAS



Report from the Letters Lady

It was cheering to read so many letters in praise of Lewis Nordan's June short story, "Sugar Among the Freaks." Fiction so seldom goads people to reach for their typewriters, one sometimes wonders if it gets read at all. It was also surprising, though not so pleasant, to encounter such vehement reactions to Steve Salerno's article on the Catholic Church. Our impression was that the piece was sympathetic and judicious; but the apprehensions of many prelates about the press seem to communicate themselves to their parishioners, too.

Words, words, words. Let me apologize on the copy editor's behalf for the error in Hugh Kenner's June piece, "The Word Police," which produced "divigates" for "divagates." You have been relentless, and we are very sorry. But let me fight back, too: one of the many readers who disliked Nicholas von Hoffman's "philippic" on Ronald Reagan suggests that a more proper label for it would have been "tirade"; while another, who disliked it equally, happens to point out that according to Webster one of the definitions of "philippic" *is* "tirade." Well, you win some, you lose some.

How easy it is to hurt people's feelings. Carolyn Ackerman of Columbus, Ind., has gotten the idea that we're not going to print readers' letters anymore, and Joanne Halatei of McLean, Va., thinks I'm "patronizing," because I begged readers to stem the flood of letters about a particular article. Nothing could be further from the truth. Please write away, dear readers, and remember:

Time to me this truth has taught
('Tis a treasure worth revealing),
More offend from want of thought
Than from any want of feeling.

By Charles Swain (1801–1874)—his only entry in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.* ■

Continued from page 5

dians are ambitious, energetic, and industrious people who are likely to "make" it here. But black Americans with those same qualities make it here, too—in spite of racial obstacles. What about West Indians who do not emigrate? How do they compare with black Americans? And do West Indian immigrants compare favorably with European immigrants? It is intellectually dishonest to cover up racism by comparing a self-selected black immigrant group with the overall population of native black Americans.

GILBERT L. RAIFORD
Miami, Fla.

Squark

Hugh Kenner ["The Word Police," *Harper's,* June] says I misspell the name of Murray Gell-Mann, inventor of the scientific term "quark." But as he who runes may rede, on page 177 of my book Murray Gell-Mann's name is spelt right. This must be some glitch in Kenner's notes.

JIM QUINN
Philadelphia, Pa.

Fungoid schlock

James Wolcott's critique of New York University's Festival of Radical Humor ["You're Under Arrest, Jane Everywoman!" *Harper's,* July] was the most perceptive appraisal I've yet read on the counterculture schlock that, like the fungoid humor of Lenny Bruce, has slithered from dingy nightclubs to become endemic in theater and prime-time TV. It is refreshing to read the comments of a writer who discusses such humor so incisively, and so devastatingly, in the kind of language the offenders —if not their chortling audiences— can understand. I shall look forward to more of Wolcott's views in *Harper's.*

CHARLES DEBUSK
Monona, Wis.

One hand clapping

The June issue of *Harper's* is tremendous. Thank you.

GERALD M. SYRKETT
Washington, D.C.



Solution to the July Puzzle
Notes for "What's My Line?"

Unclued horizontal lights are craftsmen; down lights, their wares: CROCKER/POTS, WAINWRIGHT/WAGON, COOPER/BARREL, FLETCHER/ARROWS, CUTLER/KNIVES, CORDWAINER/SHOES.

Across: 5. bower, two meanings; 8. re-fine; 8. cat-o(-nine-tails); 11. th(e)-rove; 12. arro(anagram)-yo(u); 13. k.-e.g.; 15. she(llac)s, "call" reversed; 23. she(ets); 24. s(h)aver; 25. endear(l), anagram; 27. (s)ea-se(a); 28. yellow, two meanings; 29. astir, anagram; 30. Dorians, anagram. **Down:** 1. c-rut-ch.; 2. red-hot, anagram. 3. C(apr)i-A(nzi)o; 4. rewake, anagram; 6. ethyl, homonym; 7. rot-or-S; 10. w.-rote; 14. g(L)ut; 16. abler, anagram; 17. fascia(P), anagram; 18. (arti)ch(okes)-ewer; 19. her-a-ld; 20. ru(nn)er, (A)nn; 21. deacon, hidden; 22. car(a)t; 26. deli(very).

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THERE'S NO SHAME ANYMORE

Influence peddlers used to deny that they were selling their connections. Now they brag about it.

by Robert M. Kaus

THERE IS a new air of freedom and enterprise in Washington. Not so long ago, a citizen couldn't sell his political connections—even to a consenting adult in the privacy of his own office—without risking censure by puritans and moralists. Back in the Truman years, when the *New York Herald Tribune* revealed that there were people going around Washington offering introductions to their friends in the administration in exchange for a percentage of whatever government business resulted, self-righteous talk of "five percenters" and "the mess in Washington" helped bring Truman down and win the 1952 election for Eisenhower. Notorious practitioners once took pains to deny they engaged in any such filthy habit. When Clark Clifford, one of the most prominent influence peddlers of the postwar period, set up shop in 1951, he told the press, "I have not and will not register as a lobbyist, for that is not the kind of work we do. We run a law office here."

But like so many other activities formerly considered sinful, influence peddling has come out of the closet. The increasing numbers who choose it as a lifestyle have learned to overcome archaic taboos. "Big deal, I'm trading on my connections," says Tom Korologos, a leading Republican lobbyist, with a shrug.

Robert Keith Gray is the most prominent of the new liberated lobbyists. A longtime Republican partygiver and -goer (he squired Rose Mary Woods during the Nixon years), Gray spent two decades as head of Hill & Knowlton, Washington's largest public relations firm. After serving in Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign, and co-chairing Reagan's inauguration, Gray decided to go into business for himself—"grab the brass ring," as he puts it. With a light touch perfectly attuned to the new Washington sensibility, Gray opened up offices in a renovated generating plant in Georgetown named The Power House. A year later, Gray & Co. is the second largest independent PR firm in the nation, with annual billings of $9 million.

"I'm making the most of my connections," Gray told the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* have helped advertise these connections with

Photograph: the New Subtlety in Washington: Robert Gray outside his Georgetown office.

avish coverage of Gray, including his generalship of the inaugural galas and his black-tie dinner for 314 (including nine cabinet members) last July on the grounds of the Capitol, in honor of Reagan ally Sen. Paul Laxalt. Earlier, there had been a dinner dance in honor of Nancy Reagan's press secretary, Sheila Tate, and a square dance in honor of the First Lady's Rodeo Drive sidekick, Nancy Reynolds herself a lobbyist for the Bendix Corporation). *Forbes* magazine enthusiastically described how Gray has "built a highly successful business out of the elusive qualities of access and influence." One client attracted to Gray by such publicity is Jackie Presser, the Ohio Teamsters Union official whose main public relations problem is his role as trustee of the mob-linked Teamsters central-states pension fund. Presser was quoted in the *Times* as saying, "If you're going to spend your bucks, spend them in the best place you can."

Before visiting Gray's firm, I laboriously gathered all the clips about his blatant currying of favor and his rush of new business, thinking that, taken together, they might approach the critical mass necessary to induce some old-fashioned embarrassment. But on arriving at The Power House, I was handed Gray and Company's publicity packet, containing the very same clips gathered in an elegant, silver-embossed folder.

Breathe free, Washingtonians. There's no shame anymore.

IT USED to be called the "revolving door"—the way prominent Washingtonians alternated between serving the government and getting rich by influencing it. Indeed, it was sometimes argued that allowing them to cash in afterward was the only way to get good people into government service. Today, the service part is increasingly regarded as superfluous.

Consider the new lobbying firm of Black, Manafort & Stone. Until last year, Charles Black was a Republican campaign consultant, advising conservative candidates like Robert Dole, Jesse Helms, and Orrin Hatch. He worked briefly on the Reagan presidential campaign. Paul Manafort directed Reagan's campaign in the South, and Roger Stone was Reagan's direct-mail fund-raiser and campaign chief for the Northeast. On Wednesday, November 5, 1980, Black and company woke up to discover that the politicians they had worked for were in charge of both the White House and the U.S. Senate.

A decade ago, the obvious next move for ambitious young politicos like Black, Manafort, and Stone would be to accept high-powered assistantships in the administration they had helped to elect, putting into place the policies they presumably believed in. Such jobs were offered, but they were not taken. Instead, Black, Manafort, and Stone became lobbyists, using their contacts to promote whatever policies clients were willing to pay them to advocate.

Black explained it all in a boyish, eager manner that somehow clashed with what he was saying. "We're Republicans," he told me. "If you needed the House Ways & Means Committee [still controlled by Democrats], we wouldn't be the best firm to see. But if you wanted to get something past the Senate, or the executive branch, then Bill Timmons [a veteran Republican lobbyist] or Bob Gray or we would be the people to hire."

Black's biggest victory so far has been obtaining a $1.1 billion loan guarantee for a shale-oil project in western Colorado owned by Tosco Corporation. Tosco really wanted this deal. In addition to Black's firm, it hired former Reagan adviser Peter Hannaford, as well as Democratic lobbyist Marcus Sisk, former Democratic Congressman William Moorhead, and former Carter White House official Anne Wexler.

The Tosco deal, Black said, points up a recent "trend" in the Washington lobbying industry: "specialization." Formerly, Tosco might have handled its plea for a subsidy out of its own Washington office. But "by using Moorhead and Sisk and Wexler on the Democratic side and us and Hannaford on the Republican side, they got better quality and better access for less money."

Black explained the advantage of hiring him: "Now, Bill Robinson, the head of Tosco's Washington office, could have gotten in to see Secretary Edwards [James Edwards, Secretary of Energy] eventually. But it would have taken a week, and it would have been an arm's-length transaction when it occurred. But, as you can tell from my wall . . ."—here Black sweeps his arm over my head and points to the wall behind me, where he has framed photographs of himself and Ronald Reagan, as well as an autographed certificate of some kind from the president—"I get my calls returned." Especially in Edwards's office, because: "I handled Jim's confirmation, you know . . ."

I MIGHT have missed Black's display of his Republican connections if he hadn't pointed it out to me, but two curved walls of photos inscribed by various GOP luminaries literally surround visitors to Stanton Anderson's office, in a stylishly renovated Dupont Circle townhouse. A White House ashtray sits conspicuously in the middle of Anderson's desk.



Charles Black: "As you can see, I get my calls returned."

Until last year, Anderson was a partner at the largely Democratic

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law firm of Surrey & Morse. But after serving as counsel to the Reagan campaign and director of one of the task forces in the Reagan transition, he says he found clients approaching him because of his "high profile." Anderson decided to go into business for himself. His new firm, Anderson, Hibey, Nauheim & Blair, had a "good year" last year, he readily admits. Asked about rumors that he himself made $500,000, he denies that this figure is "in the ballpark." Would cutting that figure in half underestimate his income? He nods yes. Poor old Surrey & Morse, meanwhile, has been forced to retain Gray's PR firm to restore some of its lost Republican swag.

Anderson's clients include Burlington Industries, Morgan Guaranty Trust, the Haitian government, and the trade association of the Japanese telecommunications industry. But Anderson seemed to be pitching for more business as he talked. He casually mentioned that he had just come from visiting Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis and



Stanton Anderson: over $250,000 a year for a "high profile."

"holding a seminar at the White House." He volunteered that another lawyer at the firm, Martin Artiano (who served as a Reagan advance man in the campaign), has "a very long association with the president and those that are close to the president."

It is because of Artiano, Anderson said, that Reagan's longtime confidant and political adviser Lyn Nofziger "asked us to help him get started" when he decided to leave his $60,000 administration post as White House political director and begin a "political consulting communications" firm. After a grueling one-year career in government service, Nofziger retired to share office space in Anderson's townhouse. "There's no doubt about it," Nofziger told CBS's "60 Minutes." "I can make more money on the outside now than I could on the inside . . ." Nofziger reportedly charges over $400 per hour for his consulting time. In a particularly subtle touch, Nofziger's desk was equipped with a bright-red telephone—"in case anybody really important wants to reach him," his partner Mark Bragg explained.

WASHINGTONIANS have been selling connections, or the appearance thereof, ever since the town was a swamp. But they were not always so honest about it, preferring instead to employ old-fashioned public relations techniques like hypocrisy and euphemism to cover their tracks. And hypocrisy, as the tribute vice pays to virtue, offered at least some reassurance that a sense of virtue and vice existed in the capital.

Consider the career of Abe Fortas. A rising young star in the Roosevelt administration, Fortas left his post as undersecretary of the interior in 1946, the year many New Dealers chose to abandon the government. Fortas joined FDR's chief trust buster, Thurman Arnold, to found what is now the 158-lawyer firm of Arnold & Porter.

Fortas was an influence peddler. One former congressional aide, who saw Fortas in action in the 1960s, remembers, "His stock in trade was his relationship with the president"—in this case, Lyndon Johnson. Fortas would call up legislators and simply announce that "*we* don't like this provision," leaving the lobbyee to guess who he meant by "we."

Compared with Fortas's bullying approach, Robert Gray's technique is positively refined. According to Gray's own publicity packet, it involves calling up White House Chief of Staff James Baker and asking, "Anyone there I should be talking to or giving information to?" But Fortas went about his business quietly, under the cover of a dignified law practice. His clients could pretend they were buying, and Fortas could pretend he was selling his scholarly legal expertise rather than his connections.

Equally important, Fortas "did public-interest work along with his fixing," as fellow New Deal lawyer and liberal activist Joseph Rauh puts it. If you read the *Washington Post* for the years from 1946 to 1965 (when Johnson appointed his friend to the Supreme Court), you will not find many articles touching on Fortas's highly paid efforts for private clients. But you will find countless articles about Fortas's liberal good works—expanding the insanity defense, seeking to free Ezra Pound, promoting bail reform, defending against McCarthyism.

When the occasional reporter zeroed in, say, on Fortas's efforts (on behalf of the Tobacco Institute) to fight federal restrictions on cigarette advertising, Fortas simply denied that his firm did any lobbying for his client.

In contrast to Fortas and Clark Clifford, Thomas Corcoran, the New Deal brain-truster who also opened his own Washington law firm, was widely criticized, in part because he had abandoned Roosevelt's ship in mid-voyage (1941 instead of 1946), but also because he neither disguised his lobbying activities nor performed diversionary good works. In 1960, Republicans in Congress put out a report vilifying Corcoran as "one of Washington's best-known influence peddlers." But Corcoran's clients still took comfort in labeling their huge payments to "Tommy the Cork" as compensation for "legal services."

For nonlawyers, hypocrisy came harder. But some tribute to virtue was still considered a professional necessity. Euphemism was a first-

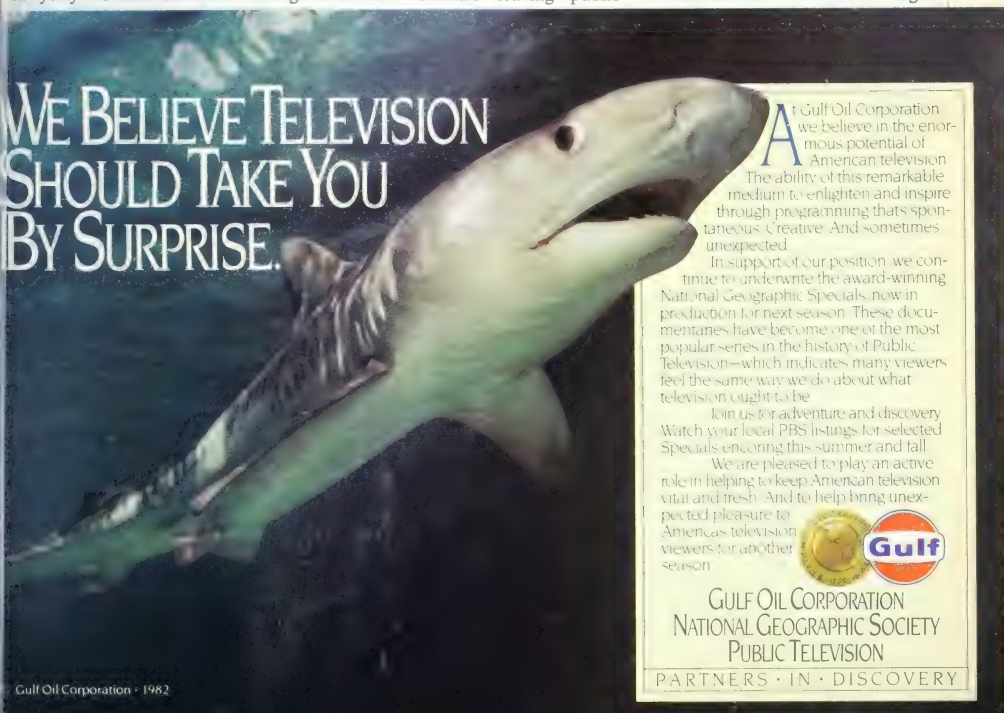
resort weapon. The very word "lobbyist" carried such embarrassing connotations that for decades practitioners tried to call themselves something else: "legislative representative," "legislative consultant," "government relations consultant," "legislative counsel," "legislative liaison," "Washington counsel," or "Washington representative." The closest counterpart to Robert Gray in the Johnson era was a lobbyist named Dale Miller, a longtime friend of the president and a practiced partygiver who, like Gray, had served as inaugural chairman. Unlike Gray, however, Miller tried to stay out of the papers and play down his intimacy with the chief executive.

"A person acquires influence in Washington through integrity and effort, not contacts," Miller preposterously assured James Deakins, author of *The Lobbyists* (1966).

With the rise of Naderism and the environmental movement, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the high tide of shame. Even the most lawyerly version of the Washington influence game—the representation of regulated companies in their official dealings with regulatory agencies and the courts—came under attack. Lloyd Cutler, the "superlawyer" for the automobile and drug industries (who didn't trade on his connections so much as snow officials with classy legal arguments), saw his offices picketed in 1969 by Nader's cadres shortly after he had negotiated a settlement in an automobile antitrust case. Nader assigned his henchman Mark Green to write *The Other Government*, an attack on precisely those Washington attorneys whose occasional good deeds hid routine not-so-good ones.

In 1976 we elected a president who had run "against Washington." Two years later, Congress passed President Carter's Ethics in Government Act. The act attempted to make it harder for public officials to cash in on their government experience and contacts. Officials leaving public service were barred for two years from acting with "intent to influence" the government concerning matters that had been under their "official responsibility." High-ranking officials were banned for a year from any contact at all with their former agencies. With characteristic prescience, Carter proclaimed that this law assured that "people who have been employed in the government cannot use this employment to go and enrich themselves by going into an area of private employment which would use their influence recently derived from Government service." The law, he said flatly, "closes the revolving door."

The law did nothing of the sort. Even the one-year "no contact" provision, the act's toughest barrier to trading on government office, didn't prevent former officials from advising clients how to approach their former colleagues. Many officials simply took assignments in academia to wait out the one-year "cooling off" period. Nevertheless, within months of the bill's sign-



ing, the boosters of Washington's largest industry counterattacked. Spurred by predictions that no one would wish to serve the government under what the *Washington Post* called "Caesar's wife" restrictions, the Carter administration supported two "clarifying amendments" that effectively gutted the Ethics Act. Where the law, for example, once threatened to punish any official who "aids, counsels, advises, consults or assists" a client in influencing his old agency, it now bans only the "personal presence" of former officials at agency proceedings—leaving a lot of room for lucrative behind-the-scenes aiding, counseling, advising, consulting, or assisting.

Among the senior officials leading the charge against the original Carter effort were Charles Curtis, chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, who later resigned to pursue a federal energy regulatory law practice, and Joseph Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare, who opened his own law firm after his involuntary departure from the Carter administration in 1979.

Two conceptual innovations have helped make influence peddling the respectable profession it is today. One is the word "access." Lobbyists discovered that while bragging about having a senator "in my hip pocket" is considered vulgar, "access" has a nice, clean ring to it, a sort of due-process legitimacy. You could talk openly about having "access" to a senator or representative—after all, access only gets you "in the door," gives you an opportunity to state your *case*, present your *evidence*. The lawmaker's decision, in this implicit courtroom analogy, would of course still be made on the merits. "We offer access," snapped lobbyist Tom Korologos, looking at me with condescending contempt, as if I'd wandered into his office from some Boys' State tour of Washington. "We don't pretend to be geologists or farmers."

People like Korologos do not waste a lot of energy pondering whether the enthusiastic paid advocacy of a client's views to an official by that official's close friend is mere "access," or how "access" is different from the "introductions" that caused a scandal in the Truman administration. They do take care, however, to distinguish "access" from "influence." Peddling *influence* is still considered vaguely unsavory—at least as we go to press. Perhaps in order to convince reporters of their keen sensitivity to questions of professional ethics, those in the industry will usually characterize the distinction between these commodities as a "fine line."

Such fine lines abound in the access-selling profession. Take Charles Black, who simultaneously runs the campaigns of Republican politicians and lobbies them on behalf of his clients. Black admitted happily that his work for senators Dole and Helms helps him gain audiences with them in his lobbying capacity. But "there's a fine line there," he quickly cautioned. "I wouldn't go lobby [Sen.] Dave Durenberger [whose reelection campaign Black is advising] and say, 'Dave, we need ten TV spots in the Minneapolis market, and so much time in some other place, and, by the way, would you pass S. 4630 out of your Health subcommittee?'" That, presumably, would be selling influence. Luckily for Black's business, however, this particular line is especially fine—"I would not in the least mind," he said, "if one of my partners asked for an appointment with Durenberger."

Black concluded, "It works."

The second innovation is the concept of the "consultant." Government functionaries like Bobby Baker tended to get into trouble if, while pursuing their official duties, they did favors on the side for a price. But others learned that if they dropped their official duties entirely and opened a "consulting" business that consisted *solely* of selling their influence—sorry, make that their "access"—everything was kosher.

The consulting concept gave nonlawyers like Black, Manafort, and Stone, Richard Allen, and Lyn Nofziger a respectable base from which to compete with fancy lawyers in the connections game. And since "access" was not only the consultants' most important product, but often their only product, they were the ones who explored the frontiers of competitive self-promotion that the more backward, stuffier, guild-oriented lawyers tended to avoid.

The breakthrough probably occurred in 1978, when tax lobbyist Charls Walker, then leader of a coalition to cut the capital gains tax, allowed *New Yorker* reporter Elizabeth Drew to follow him around for a week documenting, in her customary detail, Walker's busy weeks of access. Many Washingtonians predicted that Walker would regret cooperating with Drew, since he had violated the lobbyist's traditional preference for anonymity and might therefore attract damaging criticism. Fat chance. The publicity of Walker's influence brought him not only more clients, but more respect in the Washington community. It undoubtedly *increased* his influence, giving him even more to market.

Today, Walker is more publicized, and more influential, than ever. It would not be too much of an overstatement to say that through the elaborate corporate tax breaks he has promoted both as a lobbyist and as a Reagan adviser, he is more responsible than anyone for the size of the current budget deficit.

Walker's lesson has not been lost. Of the lobbyists I talked to, not one failed to brag, on the record, about his connections with the administration—from Black ("I get my calls returned") to Stanton Anderson ("We certainly have contacts in the administration, because we worked very closely with some of those guys") to Bob Schule, a Democrat and former Carter aide, now a consultant with Wexler's firm ("The guy who replaced me is a friend of mine. We've traded places

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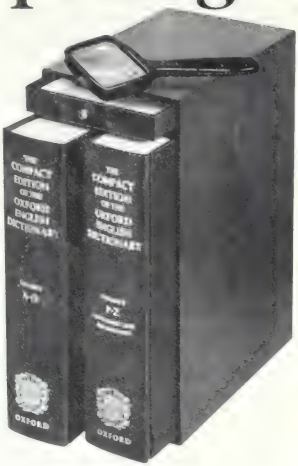
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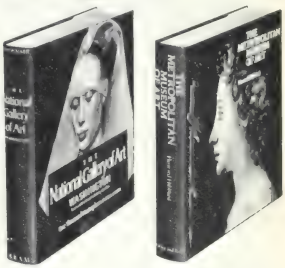
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before"). Neal Gregory, chief lobbyist for Hill & Knowlton, the PR organization that lost its most important GOP connections with Robert Gray's defection, nevertheless insisted manfully that living on Capitol Hill helped him make key contacts because he had "children of congressmen coming over for slumber parties."

Today, the air of Washington is filled with the barking of access peddlers, the crass ring of connections being cashed in. Congressmen have always turned to lobbying as a way to avoid going "back to Pocatello," but now they are doing it in record numbers. From 1946 to 1966, an average of nine ex-congressmen and -senators formally registered as lobbyists after each election. But out of the eighty-five legislators who left Congress in 1980, no less than twenty have registered as lobbyists, and one as a foreign agent, while another fifteen work for Washington law firms, consulting firms, or interest groups.

Even their wives are getting into the act, as reported by Donna Fenn in the June *Washington Monthly*. Congressional spouses once earned pocket money by going into catering, like Mrs. William Proxmire, or real estate—two professions where connections weren't exactly unimportant, but where the idea that influence was being purchased could remain safely inside the mind of the client (as when the Saudis attempted to steer Sen. Mark Hatfield's wife a $100,000 commission on an embassy purchase). But here, too, the customary level of hypocrisy has been dangerously lowered. Earlier this year, Nancy Thurmond, Strom's wife, went to work directly for Gray's lobbying firm (which has had clients with bills pending in her husband's Judiciary Committee). She might just as well have hung out a shingle that said SENATOR'S WIFE.

The crude atmosphere of quid pro quo is intensified by the role of professional influence peddlers in administering Political Action Committees (PACs), one of many ironic consequences of the post-Watergate campaign-spending reform laws. As explained by Walter Shapiro in the July *Harper's*, the law forbids individuals to contribute more than $1,000 to a congressional campaign, but permits corporations and trade associations to form PACs and give up to $5,000. Operatives such as Walker or Democrat Thomas Boggs (son of Rep. Lindy Boggs and late House Majority Leader Hale Boggs) often control or advise dozens of these PACs for their clients. They also sponsor campaign fund-raisers at which their clients have the opportunity to buy tickets, or whole tables. This makes them just about the only people left who can claim credit for a significant chunk of a politician's campaign budget. In the bad old days, a campaign bankroller might have had any number of motives, maybe even idealism. Today, the big bankrollers are people whose sole and explicit purpose is to purchase votes.

The campaign contribution game can be as convoluted as a dope deal. Albert Hunt reported in the *Wall Street Journal* that shortly after Tosco got its billion-dollar loan guarantee it started receiving invitations from Tommy Boggs to attend his fund-raisers, and letters from Boggs's law firm suggesting that it could handle Tosco's legal work. Tosco had not previously been using Boggs. A subtle shakedown? Hard to tell—but if I were Tosco, Boggs would not be someone I'd wish to annoy.

PERHAPS it would be useful to review the reasons why it was once thought shameful to trade on one's connections with the powerful. There are at least four such reasons. They are not terribly profound.

First, and most obvious, the possibility of trading on official connections inevitably affects the performance of the officials who acquire those connections. This is the traditional objection to the revolving door: government regulators will be nice to the regulated industries that might employ them in the future, Pentagon colonels will snuggle up to defense contractors, etc. In today's Washington, this objection may be writ large. Was the enthusiasm of a Carter administration official like Energy Department counsel Lynn Coleman for a massive government synthetic-fuel program enhanced by the prospect that such a plan would allow Coleman to auction himself off to the highest-bidding law firm, after Carter's defeat, for an annual sum reported to be close to $500,000? Does it ever cross Ed Meese's mind, when Tom Korologos walks in the door, that he, Meese, might need a job someday—and that Korologos's firm might offer one of his most attractive options, or at least help "open some doors"?

Second, access is not an antiseptic, neutral commodity. With a legislature clogged by complex issues and an executive branch congenitally racked with internal dispute, the ability to present your case—or to present it louder or more often than the other side—can be the decisive factor in winning your case. There were half a dozen plausible-sounding reasons, for example, for Congress to pass (as it did) a law requiring natural-gas consumers in the Northwest to subsidize the building of the Alaskan Natural Gas Pipeline. There were also persuasive reasons for opposing the unusual shift of risk to consumers. But Congress hardly heard this second set of reasons, or heard them too late, because the people who had "access" were the swarm of lobbyists —including prominent Democratic exiles Robert Strauss, Walter Mondale, and Anne Wexler—that the pipeline companies hired to press their case. All other things being equal, those who can afford to hire Walter Mondale or Robert Strauss effectively have more votes in Congress than the rest of us. The size of Mondale's and Strauss's fees cannot be explained any other way.

Third, access peddling is politically corrosive to its participants, making them forget what they stood for—and even that there's anything worth standing for. The effect is especially pronounced these days for the Republicans. Korologos, who directed Reagan's transition into office, describes himself as "an old-

fashioned Republican fussbudget." Does it bother him that he has lobbied against several of Reagan's programs (sometimes on behalf of tax breaks that have increased the budget deficit)? "Not a bit," he says. "Ronald Reagan doesn't pay me." Fair enough. Of course, if Reagan ever succeeded in his goal of dismantling the federal bureaucracy, Republican lobbyists like Korologos and Black would be out of a job. But it is a threat they have learned to live with. "In our lifetime," Black notes with a satisfied smile, "the government's not going to go away."

Nor do the new Republican access peddlers seem embarrassed because—like the New Class of Democratic do-gooders vilified by the neo-conservatives—they too are growing fat off Big Government. Often, the fact doesn't seem to have penetrated. Reagan aide Michael Deaver complains to the press that he will have to quit the White House at the end of this year because he can't afford to live on his $60,662 salary. Deaver says he plans to return to the "business world," as if he were talking about some good Republican supply-side job out there in the heartland, producing jobs and wealth. In fact, of course, Deaver plans to follow in Lyn Nofziger's footsteps, and return to a "public affairs" job in Washington where he can cash in on his brief, painful period of government service.

Democrats are not immune to the morally numbing effect of lucrative connection-peddling jobs either. Robert Gray's chief lobbyist, for example, is a smooth, fifty-year-old Louisianian named Gary Hymel. Until last year, Hymel was administrative assistant to House Speaker Tip O'Neill. Now, after an appropriately well-publicized party celebrating his defection to Gray—at a doubling of his $55,000 congressional salary—Hymel is lobbying on behalf of several corporate clients against Reagan's "minimum corporate tax," one of the president's rare attempts to temper his tax policies. How does Hymel defend his switch? "It's not a party thing, it's a technical thing," he answers quickly. "A lot of Democrats are against the minimum tax. And it's not something that Tip O'Neill's going to break his pick over."

Obviously, Hymel's clients have not hired him to oppose this tax because they regard it as a technical matter of no real import. Hymel is being paid to help prevent an encroachment on last year's corporate tax cuts so mild that Ronald Reagan himself proposes it. If Tip O'Neill does not regard this as a "party" matter, that is just further evidence of how the Democratic Party has lost its ideological moorings. Is anything a "party" issue for the Democrats these days? People like Hymel both exploit and promote this relativistic political atmosphere, in which few issues are decided on the basis of ideological conviction, and many become mere "technical" questions, open to the well-paid intervention of lobbyists.

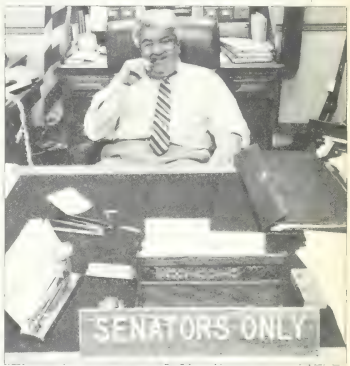
Finally, there is the musty moral point that influence peddling is simply corrupt. It's not just that peddlers of both parties can be accused of running protection rackets—Democrats protecting regulated industries against regulations Democrats enact when in power, Republicans protecting subsidized industries against overenthusiastic application of free-market principles.

The real moral problem is simpler than that. People shouldn't be able to enrich themselves because of connections with the powerful—by charging a toll, in effect, for bypassing the ordinary processes of democracy. This is graft. It is corrupt, whether it comes in the crude form of a "five percenter's" offer of access at the Pentagon, or the lawyerly advice of a Clark Clifford, or the slickly publicized services of a Gary Hymel.

Not all forms of corruption can be outlawed, and this is probably one of the many that cannot. No Ethics in Government Act can possibly stamp it out, short of barring government officials from talking to their friends or seeking private employment, hardly a desirable solution.

But until recently, there was something, less formal than a law, that at least held the corruption in check. This was a public morality and its disciplinary mechanism, shame. Abe Fortas didn't flaunt his influence peddling in public—not for fear of legal prosecution, but for fear of public embarrassment and scorn. This fear—and the secretiveness and hypocrisy that it entailed—served to limit the scope of Fortas's activities, and to discourage others from becoming Fortases themselves, all to the undoubted benefit of the republic.

In today's post-shame Washington, these inhibitions are on the verge of disappearing. So it was refreshing to read the recent comments of Joan Braden, prominent Democratic spouse and hostess, friend of the Kissingers and Rockefellers. Braden, needless to say, has accepted a position with Robert Gray's public relations firm. But, on taking up her post in The Power House, she said a peculiar thing, something that showed that she was not quite in tune with the new ambience that men like Gray are helping to create. Indeed, Braden's comments had a positively nostalgic ring to them. "I told Bob that the one thing I wanted to be careful about," she told the *Washington Post*, "was . . . not to be hired on the basis of whom I knew or whom I could bring into the company because of my social contacts."



Tom Korologos: "We offer access."

Thank God there are still some hypocrites left. ■

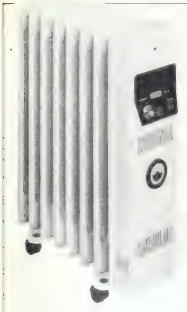
TOOLS FOR LIVING

When *Tools for Living* originated eight years ago it was with the idea that complete information about our products would be the key to our success. We believed then, as we do now, that our readers wanted to learn everything they could about an item they were interested in buying. That's why we developed our editorial, often long-winded approach to mail order advertising. In this way you are better able to make your own judgments as to whether you like, want or need a particular item. We're always happy to answer any further questions you might have about our products. At *Tools for Living* we like to think we're a product information service as well as a dependable marketplace for unique, useful, fine quality products.

DUST MAGNET



If we ever compile a book on *The Old Ways That Were Better Ways*, we will certainly include a chapter on the lambswool duster. This remarkable implement originated, the best we can tell, in 19th-century England where it quickly put the feather-duster to shame. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. When soiled, just wash it in warm soapy water. Let it dry, fluff it out and store it, hanging from a conveniently located hole at the end of its handle. This 20" duster costs **$8.00** ($1.95) =A163.



SPACE-AGE SPACE HEATER

Most of us have turned back our thermostats in favor of saving energy and money. But on chilly mornings we really pay the price for our conservation efforts. If you own a portable radiator with an automatic timer you can keep your central heat down while still maintaining room comfort—24 hours a day! Such a heater is the DeLonghi, made in Europe where they've known for years that it makes sense to heat only space being occupied. You can program this portable heater to go on and off in 15 minute intervals day or night. For example, set it to go off a few minutes before you wake in the morning so your bathroom or bedroom has started to warm before you get up!

The DeLonghi is permanently filled with a special diathermic oil that never needs replacing. It heats up quickly and cools slowly, radiating heat long after shutting off. The unit has three heat settings (600w, 900w and 1,500w) and provides a maximum of 5,100 BTUs at the highest setting. A built-in thermostat responds to room temperature, automatically shutting off when the room has reached your comfort level, automatically turning on again as the room cools. Chief among its many virtues is safety. Where many heaters operate at extremely high temperatures, the DeLonghi never gets dangerously hot, making it perfect for a child's bedroom or playroom. This unit has 4 wide base wheels for complete portability and eight heat fins. The DeLonghi is all-steel construction with a baked-on enamel finish in a neutral oyster color. It's 18"x8"x25", weighs 38 lbs. and is UL listed. This model with automatic timer costs **$150.00** ($12.95) =A485. An identical model without the timer is made by DeLonghi and available through us for **$140.00** (12.95) =A487.

ALL-IN-ONE KNIFE



First off, this is *not* a cleaver. It's a Chinese knife—an implement so sophisticated and versatile that it is the *only* knife to be found in most Chin kitchens. The knife's weight actually does the cutting for you. you need to do is guide its action. It is the ideal tool for slici shredding, mincing or chopping and is so well balanced that it c be wielded in a variety of ways (an illustrated folder shows ho with surprisingly little effort. And the blade is for more than j cutting. The squared-off front edge makes a fine scraper; the th back of the blade can be used to tenderize meat; the side will cru garlic or ginger. The broad flat shape of the blade encourages use as a spatula, making it super easy to transfer what you have to pot or pan. We are offering an improved version of t traditional Chinese knife made to the exacting specifications Joyce Chen. The knife blade is made of chrome molybdenu steel, which gives you a long-lasting sharp edge that will not sta or rust; the non-slip hardwood handle is riveted to a full tang. Th knife costs **$25.00** ($2.95) =A410.

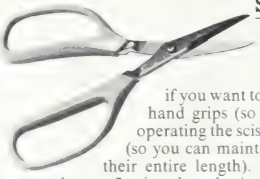
LITE-SAVERS



If you're tired of climbing ladders and getting into precarious (often dangerous) positions to change an out of the way light bulb then you should know about Mellin Lite-Savers. Adhered to the base of any *one way* bulb the Lite-Savers can extend bulb life from 50 to 100 times! Just think of the money saved in light bulbs! Most bulbs have a rated life of 750 hours or 32 days if used continuously. With Lite-Savers your bulbs will burn up to 75,000 hours or about eight years if used 24 hours a day. They're ideal for hallways, staircases, or anyplace where replacing light bulbs is a time consuming nuisance. You notice that Lite-Savers reduce light output so you may want increase bulb wattage. They're safe, dependable and insta quickly and easily with any one way bulb. The manufactur offers a limited eight year warranty. We offer the Lite-Savers in package of 6 for **$17.00** ($1.95) =A548 or 12 for **$27.00** ($2.9 =A549.



SENSIBLE SCISSOR



Most scissors are bui backwards, with lon blades and tiny handles. Bu if you want to exert leverage, you need larg hand grips (so more of your hand goes int operating the scissor) and relatively short blade (so you can maintain full cutting pressure alon their entire length). Finally a pair of scissors ha come along reflecting these basic physical facts. The generousl large flexible plastic handles accommodate most of your hand (fingers of a man's hand) and fit a right or lefthanded perso equally well. The blades are made of high carbon tool steel (fo sharpness and strength) and are chrome finished (for protectio from staining). These scissor blades are so sharp that they bit right into whatever you are cutting. They are marketed primaril as gourmet kitchenware and they are superb in that role. Th tapered points let you get into small places cutting chicken, fish lobster shells, small bones and so forth. But these scissors ar much too sensible and flexible to be confined to the kitchen. The are equally at home in the workshop, garden, office or hobb center where they cut rubber, plastic, cardboard, wire, flowe stems, leather, cloth and other materials. We can supply thes Joyce Chen scissors for **$13.00** ($1.95) =A411 a pair.

'AN FOR ALL SEASONS



Have you ever noticed how one oom can be chilly while the very ext room tends to be warm? You on't have to put up with such iscomfort once you've installed ie Con-Serv room-to-room temerature balancing fan. This little in mounts high in the frame of a oorway (it tucks unobtrusively n the outer side so the door can e closed) and directs and balnces the air flow. Since warm air nds to rise to the ceiling, it makes good sense to have a fan up ere. And since it's reversible you can use it all year-round . . . ecirculating the warm air down into the room during the winter onths, moving cool air-conditioned air more efficiently in sumertime. It can actually help save quite a few dollars on the costs f heating and cooling as you stay comfortable without having to djust the thermostat. The Con-Serv temperature balancing fan as a 110-volt motor with a 10-foot cord and an in-line switch. It's uite easy to mount and comes with a mounting bracket, screws, lips and complete instructions. It weighs a mere 2 lb. 3 oz. and neasures 5½" × 5" × 3½". **$28.00** ($3.95) =A397.

:ONVERT-A-BULB



The Convert-A-Bulb adds 8 to your light bulb

If your house is typical, you have t least two or three 3-way light xtures. *Now you can save $15 per xture when you next change the ght!* Here's how.

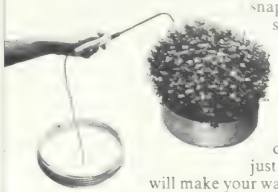
Three-way bulbs have some ajor shortcomings. They are noceably more expensive than regular bulbs, and they come in a limited ange of sizes and styles. Also, a 30-70-100 watt -way light at the highest setting gives you only 285 lumens of light; a plain 100 watt bulb gives ou 1740 lumens.

The Convert-A-Bulb simply screws into your 3-way fixture and nables you to have *3-way action from a less expensive regular ightbulb.* You can use any screw-in standard base bulb from 7½ to 50 watts in your 3-way lamp with no loss of function! You also ain bulb life; 2 times rated life at the high setting, 6 times at nedium and 30 times at the high setting!

This is where it gets interesting. Let's assume you replace a 0-100-150 watt 3-way bulb with a regular 150 watt bulb. What do ou save? First, because of the lumen differential between regular nd 3-way bulbs, you now get at the medium setting the same mount of light you formerly had at the high setting—a savings of 7 watts per hour. Now the regular bulb at medium setting will last times its rated life of 750 hours, or a total of 4500 hours. The total avings is 121½ kwh. At 7¢ per kwh for electricity you save $8.50. lus this; 3-way bulbs are usually rated at 1200 hours, so you'd eed four of them at $2.20 each to outlast this one regular bulb, at 1.50. That's another $7.30 savings for an overall windfall of $15.80 ver the life of *the first bulb alone!* The Convert-A-Bulb is U.L. isted. Buy one for **$9.00** ($1.95) =A495, two for **$17.00** ($1.95) =A496 or three for **$25.00** ($2.95) =A497.

WATERING WHIZ

Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There *is* an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. Think of the steps waiting to be saved! This 50' (that is a *lot* of reach) vinyl hose readily attaches to any household faucet. From there you just take the water where you want it—an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off as needed. This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health as well as its beauty. The complete indoor garden hose kit costs just **$11.00** ($1.95) =A341. It will make your watering almost as simple as turning on the faucet.



SAVINGS IN THE SHOWER



Tools For Living has discovered a finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver manufactured by Con-Serv, which cuts the use of water—*hot water*—in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. Remember, heating water throughout the year is second only to the cost of heating the house. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gals. of water—much of it heated—every day. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of between $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. The prototype of the Deluxe Fuel Saver was originally developed for use in the U.S. nuclear submarine program. Con-Serv designed the new Deluxe Fuel Saver expressly for the consumer, without compromising comfort or high quality. Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated—utilizing the Venturi principle—for an invigorating shower. It delivers a comfortable yet forceful spray—forceful enough to quickly rinse shampoo suds out of a long, thick mane of hair. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily over the standard ½" shower head arm with pliers or a wrench—no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for **$16.00** ($2.95) =A351.

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUARANTEE: We ship via United Parcel Service wherever possible to insure prompt delivery. The cost of each item is shown followed by its shipping and handling charges in ( ). Be sure to add the cost **plus** shipping and handling charges for each item ordered to arrive at the **total price** of each item. If you are not satisfied for any reason, return the article to us within 30 days, and we'll exchange it or refund the cost, per your instructions.

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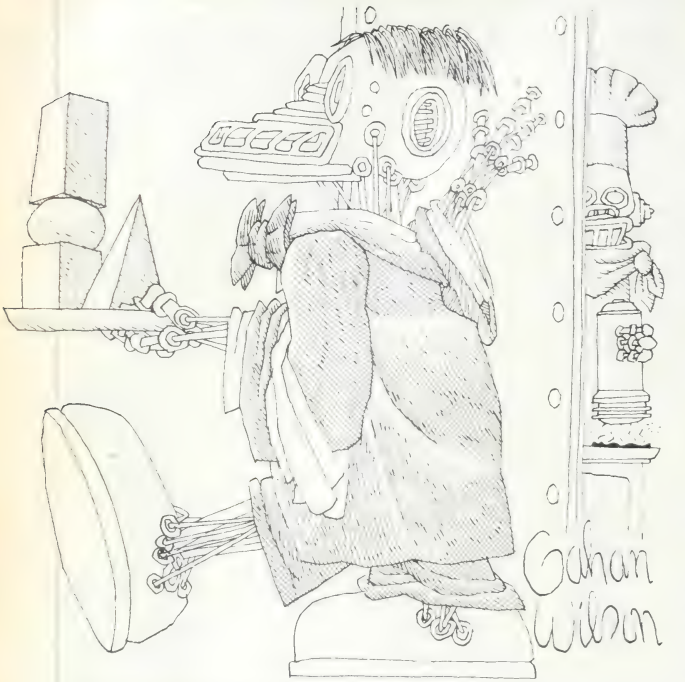
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Total Amount $_____



MAKE MINE MOINK

by Jim Quinn

Plate coverage, mouth feel, and other ingredients of modern restaurant management.

HERE IS a traditional recipe from an aristocratic old New York hotel, famous for its banquets:

Take a griddle and heat it to 800°. Take several hundred three-inch-thick filet mignons and sear them black, one minute a side. This will seal in the juices and prevent them from drying out entirely. Then pop them in a slow oven (200°) for two hours. At the end of that time you will have an odd little piece of meat, part-grilled, part-roasted, part-steam-tabled, which will look like an ordinary filet broiled to a passable medium. Call it either medium-rare or medium, according to the customer's order, and call the last ones out of the oven well done. Serve with every possible flourish—a scrap of watercress, a mushroom cap, a puddle of canned beef gravy—and charge at least five dollars more than the highest priced steakhouse in town.

Jim Quinn's latest book is American Tongue and Cheek, *a Populist Guide to Our Language (Penguin).*

The filet will be tasteless from all the long slow cooking, and at best lukewarm (a temperature at which, since it's neither hot nor cold, we should, according to Jesus Christ, vomit from our mouths). And there may be a little trouble with people who order their filet rare—instruct your waiters to say, with all the aristocratic old haute-cuisine hauteur they can muster, "The chef will not serve our filet mignon *over*rare. The meat must, after all, be cooked to be properly enjoyed." Something like that should overawe any malcontents.

The old filet recipe represents the triumph of Modern Restaurant Management in the 1960s. Rather than paying a chef to stand around and cook, Modern Management used a short-order cook—the tradition in this famous hotel was that he got two quarts of beer, free, to replace the water he lost in sweat standing over the griddle. And the filet itself became something a waiter could take from an oven, decorate, and serve—without talking to anyone in the kitchen. And with no danger of burning his fingers.

Now here is another recipe, assembled from *Restaurant Business*, the magazine of Modern Restaurant Management, in 1981:

Buy prefrozen, boneless, portion-controlled prime rib, presliced, prebrowned around the edges, already roasted a uniform rare. Slice, plate, cover with vented polyfilm and cook sixty seconds on high in a microwave. Serve it a perfect medium rare with Skincredible Shells, frozen prebrowned potato skin "with just enough potato left on" to form them into identical little scoops. Skincredibles will heat right along with the rib, and can be lavished with sour-cream-type filling or, for a nouvelle cuisine touch, frozen avocado pulp . . .

Gahan Wilson

It's easy to make fun of prefrozen haute cuisine and imitation ingredients—and that's exactly what I'm going to do. But first I should point out that 1981 prime rib, although it is not prime, and has probably come from some part of a steer that is nowhere near the rib, definitely tastes better than the 1960s filet did. The purpose of Modern Restaurant Management, however, has not changed. The chef has been replaced by an unskilled employee, who now does not even have to know how to use a flipper and who no longer requires two quarts of beer as a prize; the waiter can still pick up the plate without burning his fingers (microwaves heat only the food), and the only conversation necessary in the kitchen should be about whose job it is to take off that sheet of vented polyfilm.

The prime rib has not been treated well—but it has been treated better. It is not as dry as the filet, it has actually been roasted once upon a time, and it has some real food value left in it. Microwaves have, in fact, improved mediocre food all across America—and I hope, for the sake of the banquet customers, that the aristocratic old New York hotel has switched over from the old-fashioned beer and griddles of the past to the fake-food wizardry of the future.

It is enlightening to read magazines like *Restaurant Business* and *Quick Frozen Foods International*—two of the many publications directed at restaurant middle managers. You know the kind of people I mean—hardworking, troubled, ambitious, determined to be understanding (the better to manipulate employees and customers), friendly, resolute, and utterly untrustworthy. The kind of people who run America.

You need a little glossary of terms to understand all of *RB* and *QFFI*. IQF, for example, means "individually quick frozen," usually an entrée, complete with sauce, that comes in its own polyfilm bag and can be "plated" (slid onto a plate in one icy chunk) in a trice, microwaved by an unskilled worker, and "menued" (listed on the menu with a fanciful description). Knorr-Swiss, a company that makes many different canned and dried sauces and soups, advertises that its instant mousse powder "can be menued at ten times food cost." High praise, but not the highest. Makers of iced-tea mix, that oddly powdery drink you find in more and more diners and cafeterias, advertise that it costs "less than two cents per serving." Remember that, the next time you find it menued at seventy-five cents —thirty-seven and a half times food cost.

An attractive IQF entrée should have "good plate coverage." Fish and extended-meat manufacturers always wax ecstatic about the plate coverage of their products. So do the manufacturers of funny-looking shapes of french fries. "Plate appeal" means it looks good on the plate—subtly different from plate coverage; Alaskan king-crab claws, which are delivered precooked and frozen anywhere you eat them outside Alaska, usually claim "higher plate appeal" than shrimp or lobster, because three or four of these fibrous limbs can be piled crisscrossed on a plate, like a half-hearted attempt at campfire building, and made to look like more than they are.

"Mouth feel," another important term, is always described as "natural"—which means that when you put a cube of imitation meat or cheese in your mouth it doesn't seem as if you're biting down on a wad of cellophane or a spoonful of Crisco. Frequently mouth feel is called "improved natural mouth feel"—a confession from the fashioners of the stuff that they were exaggerating a little when they claimed natural mouth feel for their creations in the past.

French fries are the single most competitive and highly advertised item in restaurant magazines. There are, of course, no french fries in American restaurants. To make french fries, you peel a potato, cut it into small shapes, and deep fry it. To make what are called french fries in an American restaurant, you need a processor, who cuts the potato into tiny shapes, frequently leaves the skin on to give it "improved plate appeal," and then processes it—dehydrates and precooks it at the same time. French fries have almost completely replaced baked potatoes in mediocre restaurants—and I'll let a french-fry processor tell you why:

"ORDINARY; EXTRAORDINARY," trumpets a double-page, four-color ad comparing baked potatoes with Simplot Ranch Cuts. Baked potatoes:

Are ordinary . . .
Raw costs are up and climbing . . .
Good bakers are hard to find.
But that's only the beginning.
You have to scrub and oil them.
Waste lots of oven room and energy baking and holding them.
Wrap them in foil and serve them with plenty of butter and sour cream.
And you can't predict demand; at the end of the night you're either running out or throwing out.

But extraordinary Simplot Ranch Cuts:

Are different . . .
Hearty slices of potato with skin still on . . .
Don't need to be served with butter and sour cream. . . .
Cut out guesswork and waste.
Six plate filling ounces are reasonably priced, including oil, labor and energy. . . .

What middle manager cannot see the value in Ranch Cuts? And if you don't like Ranch Cuts, you can have almost any shape you want—french fries with only a tip of skin left on, french fries concertina-shaped, or "crinkle cut," french fries shaped like huge potato chips with the skin on. Ore-Ida calls them "Potato Planks" and praises their improved plate coverage. Ore-Ida also guarantees of its frozen steak fries that "50% are over 3 inches and a maximum of 7% under 2 inches." Larger fries take up more room and look better: increased plate coverage and plate appeal "for a lower cost per serving."

Many makers warn against "bargain" fries (their quotation marks). Bargain fries, it turns out, are underprocessed. Devious manufacturers have not sufficiently precooked them, to save on their own energy bills. "Bargain" fries are "often shipped practically raw . . . short on servings, long on water," more like real potatoes, in short. "Waterlogged, underprocessed fries take longer to cook . . . the excess water you cook out can make your oil break down faster, turn rancid, discolor," and you have to change it from time to time, increasing costs. Frymax, a frying oil, advertises that normal oil breaks down after a mere 2,734 ten-ounce servings of chicken and four-ounce servings of french fries have been fried in it, while Frymax, abnormal in a way that is not revealed, does not break down until 2,948 servings have been fried.

I sometimes have the feeling that I've been unlucky enough to receive the 2,947th Frymaxed chicken—dark flecks in the artfully induced nooks and crannies of the breading, and tasting as if it had been marinated for a week in sour chicken soup.

BUT BACK to potatoes. Shoestring potatoes, and potatoes cut so thin they should be called noodle potatoes, are more and more popular in fast-food chains. Here's the reason: the thinner they are, the more servings management gets. "5.2 regular servings a pound vs. 4 regular competitive servings," says an ad for Farm Fries Shoestrings. Plus, shoestrings cook in 120 seconds at 335° Fahrenheit, vs. 180 seconds at 350° for regular fries. Turn down the heat, speed up the serving line, increase servings —buy these shreds of desiccated precooked potato and make more money out of everybody who orders them.

Of course, baked potatoes are still possible in a restaurant with a really clever middle manager. Here is a recipe paraphrased from *RB*:

> *For baked potato. Put medium potatoes (eighty to ninety count per fifty lb.) in a microwave one inch apart. High heat ten to fourteen minutes. Let stand three minutes* [possibly so that they will be easy to handle, but *RB* doesn't say why]. *Slice the top off, remove pulp, mix it with any dressing* [*RB* recommends chili sauce, another nouvelle-cuisine touch], *restuff, and refrigerate. Reheat to order in two minutes. Only 120 seconds, quick as a shoestring fry.*

Breaded food is the second most popular item in restaurant magazines. "Japanese breading" is a new process, whereby tiny flakes, which appear to be chips of breadcrust, are made to adhere to fish or flesh. The thick and ragged nature of the coating has lots of plate appeal and increased plate coverage, but up until the middle of 1981, there was a problem—some of the stuff used to drop off, baring the food underneath, and resulting in "lowered customer appeal." But *QFFI* happily reports that a new process has eliminated that defect; now improved Japanese breading is available in "natural and artificial colors . . . including natural, white, toasted, lemon, peach, caramel, orange, and dark yellow." It may come as a shock to some patrons of fast-food stands, but the appetizing color of deep-fried chicken and fish is not from frying but from the dye in the breading.

Pierce Oven-Wing -Ding are especially designed for the manager with only half a kitchen: even if you don't have a deep fryer you can serve these precooked, prebrowned wings. They "heat up crunchy on the outside" with a few minutes in either conventional or microwave oven. Treasure Isle, a seafood processor, offers Golden Lock breaded shrimp, which "can be overcooked for up to ten minutes without burning," that is, darkening outside, or, even worse, "shrinking." If overcooking is not your problem, Treasure Isle has yet another breaded shrimp, Riksha, with "a holding time of over one hour." Who knows what iron-hard and impervious material that "breading" is made of. More important, who knows what's inside? Extruded shrimp has been around for years. The shrimp is ground into a paste, shaped into a large slugiform curl, and then breaded. It is only a step from extruding shrimp to extending it, and finally, to Treasure Isle reconstituted shrimp extended with FISH. The emphasis is *RB*'s own, announcing this new process by which Treasure Isle is able to "extend the shrimp naturally . . . it is said to taste like shrimp because shrimp is the primary ingredient." I have eaten extruded shrimp, and so have you if you've ever ordered a mixed-seafood platter at one of those appalling restaurants on American turnpikes—they're easy to recognize, even without the taste (which is anonymous and like leftover cream of wheat in texture), because they are such perfectly shaped little lumps and they come without tails. But, frighteningly, the picture accompanying the prose about Treasure Isle's new fabrication shows peeled shrimp, mixed red and white in color, and shaped just like fresh shrimp. Watch out for your next shrimp cocktail on the road.

Some of the ads have a greedy simplemindedness that's genuinely charming. Like this one, for French's Cattlemen's Sauce (a brownish ketchup), written, as these ads often are, in the hortatory present:

> *Chicken is what they want. With Cattlemen's it's worth more. Like 75¢ more. It couldn't be easier to fix. All you do is baste on a little Cattlemen's while you broil, bake, grill. Then call it something special like Cheyenne Chicken. It'll mean extra value to your customers. Plus an extra 75¢ margin to you!*

WHEN I SAW how much profit my ovens were burning up," says one smiling and balding middle-aged man in a neat, twenty-year-old suit, "I had one thing to say."—MOINK. MOINK is a trade name of the Oscar Mayer Foodservice Division, accompanying a trademark that looks and sounds like a pig, a turkey, and a cow all

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UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY

in one. And possibly tastes the same way. MOINK is precooked food. "We'll pre-fry the bacon, pre-cook those juicy smoked sausages, and even pre-slice our famous hams." The turkey breast, borne proudly by a smiling and motherly woman on a big platter, is a huge, pale, perfect mound that looks as if it has been heaped in a giant gelatin mold. And it probably has. You've eaten MOINK in lots and lots of restaurants that used to have ovens but now have higher profits.

More interesting even than MOINK are portion control and shaped meat. Colonial Beef will provide you with meat chopped and shaped into patties, breaded or unbreaded, in five different shapes: chop (which looks like a blobby pork chop), natural (which is domed on top and flat on the bottom), tapered (which looks like a large goose egg), oval (which is oval with a flat top), and hoagie (which is long and round at both ends, the better to fit on a roll). A specialty is breast of lamb, which has had a pocket cut in the thin layer of meat over the ribs of lamb, the pocket filled with ground lamb, and the bone removed. The result is something that Colonial Beef calls, complete with quotation marks, "chops." "Chops" are real meat streaked with fat on the outside, and ground lamb inside—good meat, too, insists Lou Waxman, president of Colonial Beef, in *RB*:

> *When working with a shaped product it is a temptation . . . to mix in heads, cheeks, ears, weasands, spleens, glands, melts, head meat and fatty tissue. We do not do that.*

The implication is that other fabricators of shaped meats, who may be supplying your local restaurant, do include all that stuff that usually goes only into pet foods. "Weasands," a word that sent me to my dictionary, turns out to be "archaic for esophagus," and "melts" is only another name for spleens—unless, and I really doubt this, Mr. Waxman means that the sperm sacs of fish are sometimes thrown into the food shaper too. It's nice to think that archaic words are being kept alive, even in one of our newest industries, and there is of course nothing wrong with any gland or weasand as food. Colonial Beef does use meat extenders in its shaped products—soy protein, for example, and, says Mr. Waxman, "products produced do not have a 'cereal bite,' but rather a 'meat bite.'"

Mr. Waxman points out an advantage of shaped meats that some of us may have failed to recognize. There was a problem with serving veal cordon bleu in hospitals. The hospital-level recipe calls for breaded veal topped with Canadian bacon and cheese. Elderly patients had trouble chewing the Canadian bacon, said Mr. Waxman. So Colonial chopped the bacon and the cheese into the veal, breaded the patty, and now you have the same natural taste, and yet it is easy to chew. Even without teeth, like all shaped meats.

Anaprime Imitation meat is made of soy in almost any flavor you could desire: ham, chicken, beef. It will not change color, or its neat cube shape, no matter what you do to it, and it cannot shrink. No preparation. Dump it in soups, use it in salads, make it into chicken à la king. And, best of all, Anaprime has 28 percent more volume than meat. "Three quarters of a pound of Anaprime has the same plate appeal as one pound of the meat being replaced." So you have two choices—cut your portions and pocket big profits, or use the same amount of Anaprime and reap equally important benefits in "customer appreciation." Anaprime comes in large cardboard cartons that look like milk containers, so it is easy to pour, and of course it has "natural mouth feel."

Swift has a Char-proof Peperoni that puts an end to charred or curled-up edges. "The confidential spice ingredient enables it to keep its color, shape and great taste . . . up to 600° Fahrenheit." "Confidential spice ingredient" is my favorite euphemism for chemical preservatives. Thank You brand egg custard comes ready to use, in a ninety-six-ounce can—just spoon this bright-yellow lavalike material into a cup and

serve, or shape first, and call it something like Mexican Flan, adding seventy-five cents to your margin.

IF YOU RUN a Mexican restaurant you can use fresh avocados. You have to throw out skins and seeds, you have to hire someone to separate and mash the fruit, you have to have a supplier who will guarantee ripe avocados or else ripen your own, and you have to worry about seasonal fluctuation in prices. Or . . . you can use Calavo frozen or canned avocado pulp, which has none of those food-management disadvantages—and if your customers notice the watery taste and hydrolyzed smooth texture, they'll never complain. *You* must have noticed that taste and that texture in cheap Mexican fast-food places yourself, reader. Did you ever complain?

Knorr-Swiss does a comparison ad—"The six-minute mousse vs. the thirty-five-minute mousse." With the instant powder, "you don't have to separate eggs, melt chocolate, or beat egg whites to perfection." Just add milk and serve. There is another important difference, since the list of ingredients includes: "sugar, cocoa, hydrogenated coconut oil, glyceryl-lacto esters of fatty acids . . . agar . . . artificial color . . ." But no eggs and no chocolate; you're not the only one who doesn't want to be bothered with melting and whipping.

Of course, liquid margarine is served as clarified butter with whole frozen lobster heated precooked, prereddened, and heated in a microwave (you can recognize frozen lobster: the shell has an odd flexibility, and keeps bending rather than breaking clean). But it takes a certain kind of bland mendacity to advertise "fully baked frozen warm-and-serve roll that has already been prespread with margarine for that 'cooked-in-butter flavor.'"
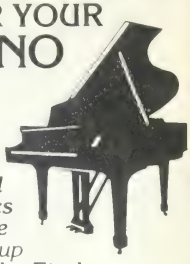
Ranch Hand offers a Roll-O-Burger, beef chopped and extruded into a hotdog shape, which can be served on a hotdog bun, needs no cooking, "can be kept warm during the day on your existing hotdog roller grill or heated for two minutes in the microwave . . . moist and meaty with a slightly charcoal-broiled flavor." Probably extruded charcoal, chopped right into the meat.

Even real items offer opportunities for customer deception. Rich's "specially designed tins give Rich's Pies more pieshell depth and higher profiles." More impact. Less cost to you. John Morrell Food Services Quik Carv is a special ham designed so that you can slice it "as thin as you like . . . serve up mountains of customer-pleasing, smokey ham flavor without losing control of costs." And make one of those three-inch-thick sandwiches, artfully piled up with slices you can read through, which pleat down to a quarter inch under the pressure of human teeth.

Crystal Tips Ice Products advertises a large freezer with ice trays that produce "Honest Ice," a special lens-shaped ice cube, flat on one side, curved on the other, designed to minimize splashing and to "nestle in the glass for maximum displacement." In other words, it takes up more room and makes your small drinks look bigger. There are whipped-cream machines that advertise a whipped product that holds its peak for hours with or without refrigeration. And to put in it, Nestlé offers a new nondairy powder that is highly versatile. "It reconstitutes to the consistency of milk, cream or half and half."

Lest you think that all this is only an American aberration, La Prairie of France supplies thirty-one French restaurants with twenty-two IQF items that can be cooked in minutes in a microwave, eight to ten portions at a time. You have your choice of things like "curried navarin of lamb with exotic rice, duckling au cointreau with pommes croquettes, supremes of sorrel with braised hearts of lettuce, blanquette of veal 'ancient style.'" Discounts on orders of 120. And, according to the possibly Anglophobic, possibly joking writer in *QFFI*, "Delivery to London is free of charge on minimum orders of a ton." ■

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THE TEDIUM TWINS

by Alexander Cockburn

Tonight: are there two sides to every question? Back to you, Robin.

(Tease)

ROBERT MACNEIL (voice over): *A Galilean preacher claims he is the Redeemer and says the poor are blessed. Should he be crucified?*

(Titles)

MACNEIL: *Good evening. The Roman procurator in Jerusalem is trying to decide whether a man regarded by many as a saint should be put to death. Pontius Pilate is being urged by civil libertarians to intervene in what is seen here in Rome as being basically a local dispute. Tonight, the crucifixion debate. Jim?*

JIM LEHRER: *Robin, the provinces of Judaea and Galilee have always been trouble spots, and this year is no exception. The problem is part religious, part political, and in many ways a mixture of both. The Jews believe in one god. Discontent in the province has been growing, with many local businessmen complaining about the tax burden. Terrorism, particularly in Galilee, has been on the increase. In recent months, a carpenter's son from the town of Nazareth has been attracting a large following with novel doctrines and faith healing. He recently entered Jerusalem amid popular acclaim, but influential Jewish leaders fear his power. Here in Alexandria the situation is seen as dangerous. Robin?*

MACNEIL: *Recently in Jerusalem on a fact-finding mission for the Emperor's Emergency Task Force on Provincial Disorders was Quintilius Maximus. Mr. Maximus, how do you see the situation?*

MAXIMUS: *Robin, I had occasion to hear one of this preacher's sermons a few months ago and talk with his aides. There is no doubt in my mind that he is a threat to peace and should be crucified.*

MACNEIL: *Pontius Pilate should wash his hands of the problem?*

MAXIMUS: *Absolutely.*

MACNEIL: *I see. Thank you. Jim?*

LEHRER: *Now for a view from Mr. Simon, otherwise known as Peter. He is a supporter of Christ and has been standing by in a Jerusalem studio. Robin?*

MACNEIL: *Mr. Simon Peter, why do you support Christ?*

SIMON PETER: *He is the Son of God and presages the Second Coming. If I may, I would like to read some relevant passages from the prophet Isaiah.*

MACNEIL: *Thank you, but I'm afraid we'll have to break in there. We've run out of time. Good night, Jim.*

LEHRER: *Good night, Robin.*

MACNEIL: *Sleep well, Jim.*

LEHRER: *I hope you sleep well, too, Robin.*

MACNEIL: *I think I will. Well, good night again, Jim.*

LEHRER: *Good night, Robin.*

MACNEIL: *We'll be back again tomorrow night. I'm Robert MacNeil. Good night.*

ADMIRERS of the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report"—and there are many of them—often talk about it in terms normally reserved for unpalatable but nutritious breakfast foods: unallur-

Alexander Cockburn writes columns for the Village Voice *and the* Wall Street Journal.

ing, perhaps, to the frivolous news consumer, but packed full of fiber. It is commended as the sort of news analysis a serious citizen, duly weighing the pros and cons of world history, would wish to masticate before a thoughtful browse through the *Federalist Papers*, a chat with spouse about civic duties incumbent on them on the morrow, and final blameless repose.

The promotional material for the "Report" has a tone of reverence of the sort usually employed by people reading guidebooks to each other in a French cathedral: "The week-nightly newscast's unique mix of information, expert opinion, and debate has foreshadowed an industry trend toward longer and more detailed coverage, while at the same time helping to reveal a growing public appetite for informational television. Nearly 4.5 million viewers watch the 'MacNeil/Lehrer Report' each night during the prime viewing season. . . ."

"A program with meat on its bones," said the Association for Continuing Higher Education, in presenting its 1981 Leadership Award. "The 'MacNeil/Lehrer Report' goes beyond the commercial networks' rushed recital of news to bring us in-depth coverage of single issues. . . . There is a concern for ideas rather than video images. . . . and they accord us the unusual media compliment of not telling us what to think, but allowing us to draw our own conclusions after we weigh conflicting views."

And the handout concludes in triumph with some findings from a 1980 Roper poll: "Three quarters of those polled said they had discovered pros and cons on issues on which they had not had opinions beforehand."

ROBERT MACNEIL (voice over): *Should one man own another?*

(Titles)

MACNEIL: *Good evening. The problem is as old as man himself. Do property rights extend to the absolute ownership of one man by another? Tonight, the slavery problem. Jim?*

LEHRER: *Robin, advocates of the continuing system of slavery argue that the practice has brought unparalleled benefits to the economy. They fear that new regulations being urged by reformers would undercut America's economic effectiveness abroad. Reformers, on the other hand, call for legally binding standards and even for a phased reduction in the slave force to something like 75 percent of its present size. Charlayne Hunter-Gault is in Charleston. Charlayne?*

HUNTER-GAULT: *Robin and Jim, I have here in Charleston Mr. Ginn, head of the Cottongrowers Association. Robin?*

MACNEIL: *Mr. Ginn, what are the arguments for unregulated slavery?*

GINN: *Robin, our economic data show that attempts at regulation of working hours, slave quarters, and so forth would reduce productivity and indeed would be widely resented by the slaves themselves.*

MACNEIL: *You mean, the slaves would not like new regulations? They would resent them?*

GINN: *Exactly. Any curbing of the slave trade would offer the Tsar dangerous political opportunities in western Africa, and menace the strategic slave-ship routes.*

LEHRER: *Thank you, Mr. Ginn. Robin?*

MACNEIL: *Thank you, Mr. Ginn and Jim. The secretary of the Committee for Regulatory Reform in Slavery is Eric Halfmeasure. Mr. Halfmeasure, give us the other side of the story.*

HALFMEASURE: *Robin, I would like to make one thing perfectly clear. We are wholeheartedly in favor of slavery. We just see abuses that diminish productivity and reduce incentives for free men and women to compete in the marketplace. Lynching, tarring and feathering, rape, lack of holidays, and that sort of thing. One recent study suggests that regulation could raise productivity by 15 percent.*

MACNEIL: *I see. Thank you, Mr. Halfmeasure. Mr. Ginn?*

GINN: *Our studies show the opposite.*

MACNEIL: *Jim?*

LEHRER: *Charlayne?*

HUNTER-GAULT: *A few critics of slavery argue that it should be abolished outright. One of them is Mr. Wilberforce. Mr. Wilberforce, why abolish slavery?*

WILBERFORCE: *It is immoral for one man . . .*

MACNEIL: *Mr. Wilberforce, we're running out of time, I'm afraid. Let me very quickly get some other points of view. Mr. Ginn, you think slavery is good?*

GINN: *Yes.*

MACNEIL: *And you, Mr. Halfmeasure, think it should be regulated.*

HALFMEASURE: *Yes.*

MACNEIL: *Well, I've got you to disagree, haven't I?* (Laughter) *That's all we've got time for tonight. Good night, Jim.*

LEHRER: *Good night, Robin.*

MACNEIL: *Did you sleep well last night?*

LEHRER: *I did, thank you.*

MACNEIL: *That's good. So did I. We'll be back again tomorrow night. I'm Robert MacNeil. Good night.*

THE "MacNeil/Lehrer Report" started in October 1975, in the aftermath of Watergate. It was a show dedicated to the proposition that there are two sides to every question, a valuable corrective in a period when the American people had finally decided that there were absolutely and definitely *not* two sides to every question. Nixon was a crook who had rightly been driven from office; corporations were often headed by crooks who carried hot money around in suitcases; federal officials were crooks who broke the law on the say-so of the president.

It was a dangerous moment, for a citizenry suddenly imbued with the notion that there is not only a thesis and antithesis, but also a synthesis, is a citizenry capable of all manner of harm to the harmonious motions of the status quo.

Thus came the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report," sponsored by public-television funds and by the most powerful corporate forces in America, in the form of Exxon, "AT&T and the Bell System," and other upstanding bodies. Back to Sunday school

went the excited viewers, to be instructed that reality, as conveyed to them by television, is not an exciting affair of crooked businessmen and lying politicians but a serious continuum in which parties may disagree but in which all involved are struggling manfully and disinterestedly for the public weal.

The narcotizing, humorless properties of the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report," familiar to anyone who has felt fatigue creep over him at 7:40 Eastern time, are crucial to the show. Tedium is of the essence, since the all-but-conscious design of the program is to project vacuous dithering ("And now, for another view of Hitler . . .") into the mind of the viewer, until he is properly convinced that there is not one answer to "the problem," but two or even three, and that since two answers are no better than none, he might as well not bother with the problem at all.

The techniques employed by the show enhance this distancing and anesthetizing. The recipe is unvarying. MacNeil and Lehrer exchange modest gobbets of information with each other about the topic under discussion. Then, with MacNeil crouching—rather like Kermit the Frog in old age—down to the left and peering up, a huge face appears on the screen and discussion is under way. The slightest discommoding exchange, some intemperate observation on the part of the interviewee, causes MacNeil to bat the ball hastily down to Washington, where Lehrer sedately sits with his interviewee. By fits and starts, with Jim batting back to Robin and Robin batting across to Charlayne, the program lurches along. The antagonists are rarely permitted to joust with one another and ideally are sequestered on their large screens. Sometimes, near the end of the show, the camera will reveal that these supposed antagonists are in fact sitting chummily, shoulder to shoulder, around the same table as Lehrer—thus indicating to the viewer that, while opinions may differ, all are united in general decency of purpose. Toward the very end, MacNeil's true role becomes increasingly exposed as he desperately tries to suppress debate and substantive argument, with volley after volley of "We're nearly out of time," "Congressman, in ten seconds could you . . . ," and the final, relieved "That's all for tonight."

It's even important that MacNeil and Lehrer say good night to each other so politely every evening. In that final, sedate nocturnal exchange everything is finally resolved, even though nothing has been resolved. We can all go to bed now.

And so to bed we go. The pretense is that viewers, duly presented with both sides of the case, will spend the next segment of the evening weighing the pro against the con and coming up with the answer. It is, in fact, enormously difficult to recall anything that anyone has ever said on a "MacNeil/Lehrer Report," because the point has been to demonstrate that since everything can be contradicted, nothing may be worth remembering. The show praised above all others for content derives its attraction entirely from form: the unvarying illustration that if one man can be found to argue that cannibalism is bad, another can be found to argue that it is not.

Actually, this is an overstatement. "MacNeil/Lehrer" hates such violent extremes, and, by careful selection of the show's participants, the show tries to make sure that the viewer will not be perturbed by any views overly critical of the political and business establishment.

ROBERT MACNEIL (voice over): *Should one man eat another?*

(Titles)

MACNEIL: *Good evening. Reports from the Donner Pass indicate that survivors fed upon their companions. Tonight, should cannibalism be regulated? Jim?*

LEHRER: *Robin, the debate pits two diametrically opposed sides against each other: the Human Meat-eaters Association, who favor a free market in human flesh, and their regulatory opponents in Congress and the consumer movement. Robin?*

MACNEIL: *Mr. Tooth, why eat human flesh?*

TOOTH: *Robin, it is full of protein and delicious too. Without human meat, our pioneers would be unable to explore the West properly. This would present an inviting opportunity to the French, who menace our pioneer routes from the north.*

MACNEIL: *Thank you. Jim?*

LEHRER: *Now for another view of cannibalism. Bertram Brussell Sprout is leading the fight to control the eating of animal fats and meats. Mr. Sprout, would you include human flesh in this proposed regulation?*

SPROUT: *Most certainly, Jim. Our studies show that some human flesh available for sale to the public is maggot-ridden, improperly cut, and often incorrectly graded. We think the public should be protected from such abuses.*

MACNEIL: *Some say it is wrong to eat human flesh at all. Mr. Prodnose, give us this point of view.*

PRODNOSE: *Robin, eating people is wrong. We say . . .*

MACNEIL: *I'm afraid we're out of time. Good night, Jim, etc., etc.*

TRUDGING back through the "MacNeil/Lehrer" scripts, the hardy reader will soon observe how extraordinarily narrow is the range of opinion canvassed by a show dedicated to dispassionate examination of the issues of the day. The favored blend is usually a couple of congressmen or senators, barking at each other from either side of the fence, corporate chieftains, government executives, ranking lobbyists, and the odd foreign statesman. The mix is ludicrously respectable, almost always heavily establishment in tone. Official spokesmen of trade and interest groups are preferred over people who only have something interesting to say.

This constriction of viewpoint is particularly conspicuous in the case of energy, an issue dear to the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report." "Economics of Nuclear Power," for example, was screened on November 25, 1980, and purported to examine why a large number of nuclear utilities were teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Mustered to ponder the issue we had the following rich and

varied banquet: the president of the Virginia Electric and Power Company; the vice president (for nuclear operations) of Commonwealth Edison of Chicago; a vice president (responsible for scrutinizing utility investments) at Paine Webber; and the president of the Atomic Industrial Forum. The viewers of "MacNeil/Lehrer" did not, you may correctly surmise, hear much critical opinion about nuclear power on that particular evening.

On May 1, 1981, the "Report" examined "the problems and prospects of getting even more oil out of our ground." Participants in the discussion about oil glut included some independent oil drillers, and "experts" from Merrill Lynch, Phillips Petroleum Company, and the Rand Corporation.

At least on May 1 the viewers had more than one person saying the same thing ("regulation is bad"). On March 27 they were invited to consider the plans of the Reagan administration for a rebuilt navy. The inquiring citizen was offered a trip around the battleship *Iowa* in the company of MacNeil, and an extremely meek interview, conducted by both MacNeil and Lehrer, of the Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman. No dissenting views were allowed to intrude, beyond the deferential inquiries of MacNeil and Lehrer, both of whom, it should be said, are very bad interviewers, usually ignorant and always timid. By contrast, Ted Koppel of ABC's "Nightline"—a far better show, covering the same sort of turf—is a veritable tiger in interrogatory technique.

The spectrum of opinion thus offered is one that ranges from the corporate right to cautious center-liberal. One should not be misled, by the theatrical diversity of views deployed on the program, into thinking that a genuinely wide spectrum of opinion is permitted. Moldering piles of "MacNeil/Lehrer" transcripts before me on my desk attest to the fact.

The show would be nothing without Robert ("Robin") MacNeil. Canadian, of course, with a layer of high seriousness so thick it sticks to the screen, MacNeil anchors the show to tedium and yanks at the hawser every time the craft shows any sign of floating off into uncharted waters. He seems to have learned—on the evidence of his recent memoir, *The Right Place at the Right Time**—the elements of his deadly craft in London, watching the BBC and writing for Reuters.

MacNeil is a man so self-righteously boring that he apparently had no qualms in setting down the truth about his disgraceful conduct in Dallas on November 22, 1963. MacNeil was there covering Kennedy's visit for NBC. The shots rang out and he sprinted to the nearest telephone he could find. It so happens that he dashed, without knowing its significance, into the Texas Book Depository: "As I ran up the steps and through the door, a young man in shirt sleeves was coming out. In great agitation I asked him where there was a phone. He pointed inside to an open space where another man was talking on a phone situated next to a pillar and said, 'Better ask him.' I ran inside. . . ."

Later, MacNeil writes, "I heard on television that a young man called Oswald, arrested for the shooting, worked at the Texas Book Depository and had left by the front door immediately afterward. Isn't that strange, I told myself. He must have been leaving just about the time I was running in. . . ."

Later still, William Manchester demonstrated that there was a 95 percent certainty that MacNeil had met Oswald. Any reporter, any human, with anything other than treacle in his veins, would naturally make much of the coincidence and divert children, acquaintances, and indeed a wider public, with interesting accounts of Oswald's demeanor at this significant moment. Not MacNeil. With Pecksniffian virtuousness, he insists that the encounter was merely "possible," and that "it is titillating, but it doesn't matter very much."

Such is the aversion to storytelling, the sodden addiction to the mundane, that produced "MacNeil/Lehrer." Like an Exocet missile, MacNeil can spot a cliché, a patch of ennui, and home in on it with dreadful speed. Witness his proclamation of political belief:

> *Instinctively, I find it more satisfying to belong with those people in all countries who put their trust in Man's best quality, his rational intellect and its ability to recognize and solve problems. It is distressing that the recent course of American politics has caused that trust to be ridiculed or dismissed as some sort of soft-headedness, inappropriate to a virile nation confronting the dangerous world. It will be unfortunate if being a "liberal" remains an embarrassment, if young Americans should begin to believe that conservatives are the only realists.*
>
> *Each has its absurd extreme: liberalism tending to inspire foolish altruism and unwarranted optimism; conservatism leading to unbridled selfishness and paranoia. Taken in moderation, I prefer the liberal impulse: it is the impulse behind the great forces that have advanced mankind, like Christianity. I find it hard to believe that Jesus Christ was a political conservative, whatever views are espoused in his name today.*
>
> *For all my instinctive liberalism, my experience of politics in many countries has not left me wedded to any particular political parties. Rather, I have found myself politically dining* à la carte, *on particular issues.*

This is the mind-set behind "MacNeil/Lehrer." "I have my own instinctive aversion to being snowed," he writes at another point. "The more I hear everyone telling me that some public person is wonderful, the more I ask myself, Can he really be all that wonderful? Conversely [for MacNeil there is always a "conversely" poking its head round the door], I never believe anyone can be quite as consistently terrible as his reputation."

Hitler? Attila the Hun? Pol Pot? Nixon? John D. Rockefeller? I'm afraid that's all we have time for tonight. We've run out of time. Good night. ■

* Little, Brown, $13.95.

ART VERSUS COLLECTIBLES

Why museums should be filled with fakes.

by Edward C. Banfield

THROUGHOUT his long public career Nelson Rockefeller was a leading—some might say *the* leading—art advocate. As much as anyone, perhaps, he promoted measures to bring art to the people at the taxpayers' expense. At the end of his life he launched another venture to bring art to the people. This one, however, was to be supported not by the taxpayer but by people who would pay for what they got. Rockefeller invested $3.5 million in an enterprise to sell reproductions of art works from his private collection. To begin with there were ninety-six reproductions for sale at prices from $65 to $7,500. For $850, for example, one could buy by mail a top-quality photographic copy of Picasso's painting "Girl With Mandolin," a work for which Rockefeller had been offered $2 million.

One might think that the art world, or at least the art advocates with whom Rockefeller had labored so long, would have cheered him on and sung his praises even louder than before. Important works of art are accessible only to people who live in or near about a dozen of the largest cities, and then usually only if they join the throngs in the galleries of the major museums. To be sure, there are several hundred small museums, but few possess masterpieces and some have nothing that can compare to any one item in Rockefeller's private collection. Of more than a hundred college art museums, only a dozen have notable works in any number; even in the best university art departments, teaching is done mainly from slides. Except here and there in the big cities, public buildings contain no art of importance. In schools and libraries across the country there is bad art or none. Except for the wealthy, ownership of important originals is out of the question. Rockefeller could have donated "Girl With Mandolin" to, at most, one museum in one city. Instead, he made it potentially accessible to almost any public institution, and even to many private citizens.

This, however, is very far from the view that the art world took of Rockefeller's last enterprise. The man who all his life had endeavored to bring art to the public was showered with abuse because of it. "We have entered a new era of hype and shamelessness . . . ," declared Hilton Kramer, the chief art critic of *The New York Times*. Other notables of the art world added their words of vilification.

What so outraged the art world was that Rockefeller had challenged the widespread opinion—one on which much of the art world depends for its bread and butter—that a reproduction cannot possibly have the aesthetic value of an original. Reproductions are sold by the millions every year, of course. Art museums, in particular, sell as many as they can. But the size and quality of most copies assures that no one can possibly find in them anything approaching the aesthetic rewards of seeing the original. Three things made Rockefeller's copying business objectionable to the art world. First was the taint of commerce. This project was self-sustaining and even profitable, rather than an act of charity or government. Second, Rockefeller offered reproductions of much higher quality than usual. Third were Rockefeller's name and standing as a collector. If anyone could cause the public to doubt that only an original could be art, it was he. Rockefeller, Kramer wrote, certainly knew the "unbridgeable difference" between a work of art and a reproduction, but "apparently the temptation to cash in on the market for *haut schlock* has proved irresistible." Kramer could hardly have supposed that Rockefeller, generous and high-minded all his life, had suddenly turned unprincipled. More likely, what so upset Kramer was that Rockefeller had turned traitor to the art world.

The position of the art world is that only bad reproductions are good. "The truth is," Kramer explained, "that these [Rockefeller's] reproductions have nothing to do with the experience afforded by

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a genuine work of art. As an educational tool, reproductions serve as aids to memory. At best they are mementos of experience rather than the thing itself." *Time* magazine's critic, Robert Hughes, took the same line. After making the point about memory aids (he specified *cheap* reproductions as "indispensable" for this), he went on to say that "even the most perfect replication" is "intrinsically dead, like a stuffed trout." Ruth Berenson, writing in the *National Review*, incautiously remarked that often there is no way even an expert can distinguish *ersatz* from *echt*," but nevertheless dismissed Rockefeller's reproductions as "high-class fakes."

In a press release about the Rockefeller Collection, the Art Dealers Association of America asserted: "Although a reproduction is and can only be no more than an imitation of the original, replicas have an undisputed educational value as inexpensive reminders of important works of art. Photographs or other copies of paintings, sculpture or antiquities also have some decorative value, as with a poster which reproduces an important painting." A few months later the association presented its annual award for outstanding achievement in art history to the director of the Fogg Museum at Harvard. The award consisted of $5,000 and a bronze replica of a stabile by Alexander Calder.

CULTURAL commentators apply a curious double standard to the visual arts and music. People who sneer at a very good reproduction of a painting will praise a far inferior reproduction of a symphony. There is, one would think, a wider gulf between seeing and hearing an opera in an opera house and seeing and hearing it on a television screen than there is between seeing an original work of art and seeing one of Rockefeller's reproductions. Yet the National Endowment for the Arts has won great praise for sponsoring TV broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera. Indeed, the bringing of "live" opera to millions who would never otherwise be able to see it was widely acclaimed as a cultural achievement. Samuel Lipman wrote in *Commentary*, "The medium's present limitations—principally the near-universality of small sets producing wretched sound, but also the more basic lack of three-dimensional visual representation—seem less significant than the possibility television presents of bringing operas in high-level productions to those who have little or no other opportunity to experience them."

Yet imagine the howls from the art world if someone were to propose that state and federal governments, rather than subsidizing the purchase of original works of art for museums and public buildings, sponsor an enterprise like Rockefeller's to make top-quality copies far more available than the originals could ever be. I go further. Why should public museums not substitute reproductions for originals,

THE NELSON ROCKEFELLER COLLECTION



145. Picasso, Still Life Le Torero—Oil on canvas, painted 1911. Browns and sepias. Framed Cibachrome 25½" x 22¼", (wt. 3½ lbs.), $450.00 ($2.70)



151. Toulouse-Lautrec, Divan Japonais—Lithograph in color (1892). One of Lautrec's first lithographs. Framed Cibachrome 40" x 32½", (wt. 10 lbs.), $750.00 ($5.75)

Keith Lovett Studios

thus drastically reducing the presently high costs of security and conservation?

The fundamental economic fact about art is that works of high quality are scarce in relation to the demand for them. This would be true even if all of the demand came from art lovers whose interest was purely aesthetic. But in fact demand based on aesthetic considerations is only a trivial part of the total demand for art. Individuals and institutions pay large sums for works of art for reasons that have nothing to do with art as such—two reasons in particular. First, art (or "art") in any form is a "collectible," like wind-up toys, Mickey Mouse souvenirs, stoneware inkwells, beer cans, and almost everything else. For the rich, valuable art (or "art") is considered more suitable than, say, old toys. An important class of collectors are antiquarians: they attach value to whatever has some association with a famous person or event: they collect relics. It was as relics, not as art, that the Gilbert Stuart paintings of George and Martha Washington were deemed worth $6 million when purchased a few years ago by the National Portrait Gallery. The other nonaesthetic interest in the demand for art, and the most important one in setting the price, is the investment interest. The investor, as investor, views all engravings exactly as he does those on his stock certificates; he buys what he believes will increase in money value faster than other things that he might buy. (When this happens, it is thanks mainly to collectors and other investors.)

No criticism is intended of those who collect art or anything else, whether for pleasure or for profit. The point is that these nonaesthetic interests in the art market compete with the public interest in making the aesthetic experience of art more widely available and more frequent. The government, acting as proxy for the public as a whole, does not buy art on speculation or as a hedge against inflation. It does occasionally buy relics (the Stuart portraits, for example), but it does so on different public-interest grounds than those on which it usually buys art to stock its museums and decorate its public places.



National Gallery of Art

The huge Arp tapestry made after the artist's death from a small sketch. (Detail)

From the standpoint of the public, it would be advantageous if the demand for art came only from those whose interest in it was purely aesthetic. In such a world, the price of art would be much lower, and the public could afford to enjoy it more. In reality, the public must compete for art in a market dominated by those whose interests are largely or entirely nonaesthetic. It would be greatly to the advantage of the public (and also of those individuals or institutions whose interest is, like the public one, purely aesthetic) if there were two markets for art: one for art as art, and the other for art as a collectible and for investment.

In effect, Rockefeller's enterprise achieved precisely this publicly advantageous separation of aesthetic from other values. By mass-producing high-quality copies of valuable originals, the Rockefeller Collection and similar enterprises make separate commodities of what would otherwise be joint ones: art as an aesthetic experience, and art as a collectible or investment. As an investment or collectible with aesthetic value, "Girl With Mandolin" may be worth $2 million. As a source of aesthetic satisfaction alone, it is worth something closer to $850 (with a suitable premium for whatever nuances of the original are lost in even the highest-quality reproduction). This suggests two things. First, $1,999,150 of the ostensible value of Picasso's original has little to do with "art." Second, a public institution or individual interested only in the aesthetic value of Picasso's masterpiece can have most of that value for only $850, and can have $1,999,150 left over to purchase other sources of aesthetic satisfaction.

When there is only one example of a work of art, there is obviously no way to make it widely accessible. By bidding against each other, buyers do not increase the supply of art. They simply raise the price. Public institutions, using taxpayers' money, participate in this process, often bidding against one another for the existing supply. From the public standpoint, doesn't it make more sense to use tax dollars to *increase* the supply and *decrease* the price of art?

THE ART WORLD will object at this point that a copy, however good, cannot have the artistic value of the original. But is this true? From a purely aesthetic standpoint, it can make no difference when, where, or by whom a work was produced: all that matters is its quality as art.

a priori there is no reason to believe that a copy annot be an even *better* work of art than a very ood original. And in fact this is doubtless some- mes the case. Michelangelo, Vasari tells us, "made opies of various old masters, making them look old ith smoke and other things so that they could not e distinguished from the originals." If these copies ere not better than the originals, it is only because Aichelangelo was attempting to make them "per- ect."

In some cultures—admittedly ones utterly unlike ur own, the ancient Egyptian and the Chinese, for xample—no distinction was made between originals nd copies. Indeed, instructions were generally pro- ided for making copies. The Romans attached very ttle importance to the difference between an orig- nal and a copy. Most Roman sculpture (what is oday "original" Roman sculpture) was copied by Greek slaves from Greek originals. The Emperor Hadrian had innumerable copies made of famous tatues, which now enrich the museums of the world. During the Renaissance, an acknowledged imitation ften brought as much as half the price of the orig- nal. There was no stigma attached to making or owning copies. The Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf I, in about the year 1600, sent his court painters o copy what was best in Venice and Rome. They lid their work so well that experts are still trying o decide which is which. "Until we reach modern imes," the art historian Walter Pach writes, "copies, mitations, and even forgeries were made by men of uch talent that the works possess qualities connois- eurs value in themselves."

Even today, many "original" works of art *are* copies in every sense except that of illicitness. It has been many years since most sculpture has been made hat is in the strict sense "original"—that is, carved by the hand of the artist. The normal practice is for the sculptor to make a model in clay, wax, or some other plastic material. The model is then either sent to a foundry to be cast or recreated by workmen on the site where it is to be displayed. Often the di- mensions of the finished work are very different from those of the model. Mechanical processes are used to enlarge or reduce the work, and the result- ing artifact is at least slightly different from what the artist conceived. Some sculptors are very particular about the quality of the finished product but others —among them Henry Moore—sell objects that they have never seen.

One must stretch the concept "original" very far to include certain famous and very valuable works, including the seventy-odd Degas bronzes, all of which were cast after the artist's death, only three of them from plaster models that he made; the huge Arp tapestry commissioned by the National Gallery and made after his death from a small sketch; and the towering Picasso sculpture in Chicago, construct- ed from a small maquette of his design but never seen by him. Indeed a court refused to stretch the word far enough to include this last item: "The ma- quette," it ruled in 1970, "was an original work of art; the monumental sculpture was a mere copy."

Prints also usually involve a collaboration between the artist and one or more craftsmen. Holbein merely drew on a wood block, leaving the carving to oth- ers. There have always been artists who are very particular about the quality of every print that is "pulled," but there are also some who are willing to leave the judgment to the printer and to sell work that they have never seen. Despite the efforts of or- ganized artists to establish standards, the word "orig- inal" now has no definite meaning with reference to a print.

To the assertion that a perfect copy has just as much artistic value as an original, the art world replies that a perfect copy is an impossibility. True enough, the history of art is filled with examples of "forg- eries" that have been detected. And as a matter of simple logic, there is no record of a forgery that has deceived everyone. But there have been many cases where experts have mistaken copies for originals for long periods of time. Painters and sculptors now and then have been unable to distinguish their own works from copies. Rodin, for example, made the mistake of suing a dealer who had offered for sale a perfect- ly authentic work of his. The Metropolitan Museum displayed its three famous terra cotta Etruscan war- riors under the label FIFTH CENTURY B.C. for forty years before discovering that they were modern works. The National Gallery displayed two "Ver- meers" for years before discovering that they were fakes.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Georges de La Tour, The Fortune Teller : *"60 Minutes" recently alleged that it's a forgery. The Metropolitan Museum denies it. What difference does it make? (Detail)*

It is notorious that all forms of art have been successfully forged time and again. Robert Reisner's bibliography *Fakes and Forgeries in the Fine Arts* lists 859 references, not including newspaper articles, to forgeries in twenty-one art forms. Every important collection has been taken in on at least a few occasions. Recently the Morgan Library exhibited seventy-five works by the so-called "Spanish Forger," which it had gathered from the collections of (among others) J. P. Morgan, the Metropolitan, the Fogg Museum of Art, the Beinecke Library at Yale, and the Cincinnati Art Museum.

The Metropolitan Museum once found itself inadvertently *producing* forgeries, when it discovered that reproductions of early American glassware in its museum shop were turning up in antique stores for sale as originals. To prevent such embarrassments, the Met now stamps MMA on all but the very cheapest reproductions it sells. This device may help prevent copies from being passed off as originals, but the fact that it is necessary illustrates that the distinction is more commercial than aesthetic.

The identification of fakes depends very largely on the development of laboratory techniques. Chemistry and physics, not the discerning eye of the art lover, make the difference. Had it not been for the spectrograph that revealed manganese dioxide in black glaze, the Metropolitan's Etruscan warriors might still be on display. And had he not seen fit to confess, thereby bringing great numbers of works into the laboratories, the paintings of the supremely gifted forger van Meegeren (1889–1947)—who sold six fake Vermeers for about $3 million—would be giving pleasure to countless museumgoers all over the world.



The Morgan Library

"Seated Ruler With Two Women and a Standing Saint," painted around 1900 by the legendary "Spanish forger." More than 200 of these imitation medieval paintings have been uncovered. Every major collection in the world has at least one. (Detail)

Van Meegeren confessed in 1945, in order to avoid prosecution for selling art treasures to the Nazis. But he had a hard time convincing the authorities that his beautiful "Vermeers" were not valuable art treasures, but rather worthless "fakes." According to W. K. Wimsatt, in his book *The Verbal Icon*, "The confession was officially accepted, more than two years later, only after the demonstration painting by van Meegeren of a seventh Vermeer under court supervision and, what was of far more weight, the most rigorous radiographic, spectrographic, and microchemical testing of the forger by a large corps of Dutch, Belgian, British, and American technicians."

If the taboo against copies and reproductions were to be broken and mass duplication of masterpieces were to become widely accepted, all prints and most paintings and sculptures could be duplicated at per-unit prices within the reach not only of schools and libraries, but of average-income individuals. The fact that it is possible to copy most works of art "perfectly" (meaning so well that differences cannot be discovered without the use of sophisticated laboratory methods) does not suggest that perfection is always necessary. Except with prints and drawings, perfect copies cannot be cheap. If the copy is only "excellent" (meaning that no one but an expert can detect a difference with the naked eye) the cost will be much less. And if it is just "very good" (meaning that an experienced—but less than expert—viewer can tell the difference) the cost will be lower still. A reasonable person must ask in what circumstances the difference between "very good" and "excellent," or between "excellent" and "perfect," is worth what it costs.

Some in the art world will say that knowingly to accept anything short of perfection is philistinism. This, of course, is nonsense. We live in a world the nature of which requires at almost every moment that some amount of one good be traded off for some amount of another. Aesthetic, and for that matter moral, values are not exempt from this necessity. Once again, the double standard for music and the visual arts is enlightening. How many people would not dream of having a "fake" Rembrandt on their walls, however high its quality, yet own and enjoy record sets of the Beethoven symphonies?

Far from encouraging the widest possible dispersal of art reproductions of as high a quality as is practicable, our present government policy is exactly the opposite—that is, it aims to prohibit the making of copies that are not so poor as to be travesties of the originals. Intentional forgery of art works, of course, has always been illegal. The art community, however, wants legal and other restrictions against copies good enough to be *mistaken* for originals. "The more exact the reproduction," write two Stanford professors, "the greater the potential confusion and the consequent devaluing effect." They would require by law that reproductions of paintings, draw-



The Granger Collection

Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa: *the real thing.*



The Granger Collection

Marcel Duchamp, crayon on a reproduction of Leonardo's Mona Lisa.

ngs, and fine prints be at least 20 percent larger or smaller than the originals and that they be clearly and indelibly labeled "reproduction." In the case of three-dimensional works, they would require a reduction in size of at least one quarter. The Art Dealers Association is the most vigorous supporter of laws and "professional standards" to limit the quality of reproductions; the College Art Association of America and the Association of Art Museum Directors are generally its allies. Since most "great" art is now in museums, obviously the museums are in a position to obstruct any large-scale effort to make high-quality copies.

It is sometimes argued that for perfect reproductions of masterpieces to become dirt cheap would be a cultural disaster. Familiarity would breed contempt. The painting before which one stood awestruck would become invisible. The Mona Lisa has been reproduced billions of times in the most preposterous contexts, but the crudeness of the imitations has helped to preserve the charm of the original. Would even the Mona Lisa survive widespread near-perfect reproduction? (In fact, there is a near-perfect version of the Mona Lisa sitting in a bank vault in New Jersey. The owners believe it is a later version by Leonardo himself, a claim that cannot be disproved by the experts. Naturally, the painting's value hinges completely on this presently unanswerable question.)

It has been suggested that something like this has happened to the great musical classics—that the Beethoven symphonies *are* degraded, the aesthetic joys of hearing them reduced, by too frequent hearing, however excellent the reproduction. But the purpose of encouraging reproduction of visual-art masterpieces is not to enable people to see them often enough to get sick of them, but to enable more people to see them at all. No one is going to travel around looking at "Girl With Mandolin" at dozens of different museums. Also, to the extent that having a copy of a classic in your house is like having Beethoven's Fifth Symphony playing all the time, it's true of those lucky enough to own originals now. Widespread reproduction would merely make both the pleasures and the possible perils of owning top-flight art more widely available.

Walter Benjamin argued in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" that works of art ought not be reproduced, because they were created to be confronted by the viewer in particular circumstances of time and place: to view them out of this intended context is to see them distorted. But, of course, almost all *original* works (except modern ones) *are* seen out of context. And, indeed, the culture having changed, it is impossible to experience a work from another time and place as it was intended to be experienced.

The real reasons for the cult of the original are cultural, not intellectual. Several powerful forces are at work to prevent the separation of artistic from pecuniary values. One consists of the individuals who own objects whose financial value would be reduced if reproductions lost their stigma and became legitimate alternatives to original works. If museums, which directly and, even more, indirectly (by virtue of the tax exemptions for wealthy donors) are among the mainstays of pecuniary values, were to substitute reproductions for originals, the multibillion-dollar art business would fall into an acute and permanent recession.



Elizabeth Taylor



Edyth Gullen

What would your wife say if you told her you saw a woman who looked just like *Elizabeth Taylor?*

Artists themselves, it should be noted, get little benefit from present arrangements. Under American law, once a work leaves their hands, they have no right to share in the profit from future increases in the work's value, and no right to control or profit from reproductions. Artists would have nothing to lose if widespread reproduction slowed the appreciation of their past creations, and everything to gain, if—as part of an effort to encourage high-quality reproductions—the law were to assure the creator control over quality and part of the profit.

A second powerful force against acceptance of high-quality reproductions consists of that large part of the art world whose interest in art is historical rather than aesthetic. In the United States, the profession of art historian came into being early in the present century, when J. P. Morgan and others of the fabulously rich took to stocking their mansions and museums with the art treasures of Europe. In order for their kind of collecting to be a workable game, there had to be umpires whose authority all players in the game would accept. Bernard Berenson, working with Lord Duveen, was the first and most important of these. Soon every major collection had to have its own expert capable of proving that a work long thought to be minor was really major. Art historians, especially those trained at Harvard, became the curators, and sometimes the directors, of the big museums. Not surprisingly, in view of what they were trained and paid to do, art historians more often than not are more sensitive to historical than to artistic values. In their eyes the authenticity of a work is of supreme importance.

To a large extent, the art-interested public consists of college graduates who learned from books and courses by art historians. Much of the public has been taught to see art as part of this history of culture, rather than as something to be responded to aesthetically. The professional's respect for the authentic, however inartistic, and his contempt for the inauthentic, however artistic, has all too often been communicated to his students and readers.

Finally, it must be said as a fact of psychology that the aesthetic interest is probably not entirely separable from the pecuniary. "We find things beautiful," Veblen observed in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, "somewhat in proportion as they are costly." That something is costly associates it in our minds with famous persons and places, with power and glory, with what stirs emotions of respect, reverence, and awe. These emotions may have no proper place in the aesthetic attitudes but they are likely to be there nonetheless. It would not be unduly cynical to say that many of the thousands who stood in line for a ten-second look at "Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer," after the Metropolitan Museum paid $6 million to acquire it, would as willingly have stood to see the $6 million in cash. To the extent that these nonaesthetic feelings are linked with aesthetic ones, the public will not accept a perfect copy (labeled as such) as a perfect substitute for the original. Asked how people would respond to perfect reproductions identified as such, the associate director of a large museum said he thought they would accept some as a supplement to a display of originals but without any originals the display would fail for lack of glamour. "What would your wife say," he asked, "if you went home and told her you saw a woman who looks *just like* Elizabeth Taylor? Not what she'd say if you said you'd seen Elizabeth Taylor in person!" ■

STATE-OF-THE-ART PANHANDLING

Forget about charity—extracting $350 million requires a well-oiled fund-raising machine.

by David Owen

Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town;
Some in rags, some in tags,
And some in velvet gowns.
—Mother Goose

THE HEADQUARTERS of the Harvard Campaign are in Holyoke Center, a cement-and-glass monstrosity just off Harvard Square. Holyoke Center was built in the early 1960s with money from Harvard's last major capital drive, and it's a prime example of the forward-looking institutional architecture of its time. Today it looks like the second-best hotel in a third-world capital. Its abject exterior is a perennial source of undergraduate hilarity.

But the offices of the Harvard Campaign, which occupy much of Holyoke's seventh floor, are perfectly pleasant. On a sunny morning in early spring, activity pulses along the central corridor. In one room, between a Coke machine and a photocopier, an automatic typewriter spews out personal birthday greetings from Harvard President Derek Bok to one of the college's aging alumni. The alumnus has just survived his eighty-fifth birthday, and the typewriter wants him to know that Bok is thinking of him. At the other end of the hall, in the library, staff members pore over newspapers and national magazines, checking the names of important people against the school's alumni rolls. Another worker consults a volume containing information on the nation's largest family foundations—Rockefellers, Mellons, Guggenheims, Pews—along with elaborate family trees and estimates of personal fortunes. Bookshelves bulge with phone directories, *Who's Whos*, *Social Registers*, biographical dictionaries, corporate analyses, pamphlets, brochures, and computer printouts detailing the giving records of past and present benefactors. Nearby are individual files on Harvard College's living graduates, containing information campaign workers have gleaned on their wealth, health, hobbies, and accomplishments.

When the Harvard Campaign began, in 1979, the goal was to raise $250 million over five years. But early this summer, when it appeared the target would be reached eighteen months ahead of schedule, Harvard upped the ante 40 percent, to $350 million. This is not a record. Yale ran a $370 million drive in the mid-1970s, and squeaked past its goal by $4 million. But the deadline in the Yale campaign had to be postponed two years. Also, Yale's drive involved the entire university, whereas Harvard's is aimed almost exclusively at the roughly 60,000 living alumni of Harvard College. Prosperous graduates of Harvard's law, business, medical, dental, and most other graduate schools are not being solicited. If regular annual donations to those schools were merely added in with Harvard Campaign receipts, the drive total would reach $500 million.

Fund-raising is a science, and Harvard practices it at the state-of-the-art level. But the Harvard Campaign is similar to major fund drives launched by other worthy institutions. As the government cuts back financing for good works of all kinds, and as President Reagan insists that private giving must take up the slack, Harvard's ability to squeeze a third of a billion dollars out of private pockets in a sick economy is worth studying. Whether the impressive machinery that makes this possible couldn't be put to some more obviously charitable use than adding $350 million to the funds of the richest university in the country is also worth a ponder. But in fact only an already rich and powerful institution could mount something like the Harvard Campaign—probably the most effective private fund-raising operation in the world. Here's how it works.

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Most of the information that Harvard keeps on its alumni comes from the alumni themselves. The members of every graduating class submit biographical sketches at five-year intervals, some of them running to several pages. These are published in book form at reunion time. The sketches chronicle the graduates' aspirations and accomplishments and hint, sometimes quite pointedly, at the state of their financial affairs. You can follow the course of a man's life and watch his career take shape or fall apart. You can also form a rough idea of how big a gift he might consider making to Harvard College. The middle-aged alumnus who, twenty-five years after graduation, begins with a lyric from the Grateful Dead ("What a long strange trip it's been") is probably not a terrific prospect. But the thirty-two-year-old who has just been named chairman of his company may be very generous.

A capital drive as ambitious as the Harvard Campaign requires financial information vastly more precise than the hints that can be gleaned from the *Class Reports*. The process of estimating the giving potential of each graduate is known as "rating." It involves several steps, beginning with "screening." In late 1978 and 1979, Harvard held one hundred meetings in forty cities around the country. At the meetings, prominent alumni were asked to estimate the giving potential of their classmates and friends. 3,500 people took part, and a quarter of a million opinions were collected.



"Let's face it—Harvard loves us for the same reason we love Harvard: we're old and rich."

Instructions for the meetings were explicit. Nothing was to distract participants from the task at hand. Desserts at luncheon meetings, one campaign worker says, were to be of the sort that could be eaten "with the fingers," in order to save time. Clubs with discriminatory membership policies were avoided at all costs. Menus were purposely kept frugal. Participants munched on cookies and viewed a film about the Harvard Campaign starring President Derek Bok and Dean of Faculty Henry Rosovsky. Then they spent an hour or so reviewing lists of names and estimating how much particular individuals ought to be able to cough up. The main purpose of the screenings was to identify alumni capable of making "special" gifts ($5,000 to $100,000 and "major" gifts ($100,000 and above). By the time the last meeting was held, 28 percent of Harvard's alumni had been screened at $5,000 and above.

Besides helping to locate the best prospects, the screening stage enabled Harvard to make some predictions about how much it could raise. Given enough financial information about the audience of a particular drive, it is possible to predict the drive's outcome in advance, even down to such specific data as the number and size of the gifts that will be received. Based on the experiences of Yale, Stanford, and other institutions, the Harvard planners knew that 75 percent of the drive's receipts would come from less than one percent of all donors, in gifts of $100,000 and above. Another 20 percent of the total would come from alumni making gifts in the $5,000 to $100,000 range—roughly 9 percent of all donors. 10 percent of all Harvard Campaign donations would thus provide 95 percent of the money. Since it's known that three prospects are needed to produce one pledge at a given level, campaign planners could make good estimates of how much money they could expect to raise.

The raw data provided by the screening sessions were refined at rating meetings held later on. A rating meeting is like a screening meeting, only more so. The idea is to weed out people who have been screened at the wrong level, and to arrive at more precise evaluations of individuals' ability to give.

Once again, the tone was serious. An alumni host was selected for each session, but Cambridge controlled everything from the mailing of invitations to the selection of locations. Hosts provided samples of their signatures so thank-you notes could be typed automatically in Cambridge and signed by machines. Luncheons were avoided altogether. Cocktails were served only after rating had been completed. Each alumnus was rated by two different groups, as an internal cross-checking mecha-

ism: once by classmates and once by alumni from is geographical area. Participants were instructed o rate their friends and acquaintances not accordng to how much they *would* give, or how much ney *might* give, but according to how much they *ould* give. The difference is crucial. "You were ot supposed to say, Well, this guy's deeply inolved in his hospital, so he's not going to give to Harvard," says one participant. Raters were enouraged to be cautiously optimistic. In the end, etter designations were assigned to all prospects eceiving three or more rating opinions at a given evel: A = $100,000 and above; BB = $50,000 to 100,000; B = $25,000 to $50,000; C = $10,000 o $25,000; D = $5,000 to $10,000. All prospects ated at D or above would later be solicited in person; everyone else would be contacted by telephone.

Actually, the most important targets of the rating essions are not those rated but those doing the ratng. From the very beginning, campaign planners ried to make as many graduates as possible feel hat their time and opinions were urgently needed. icreening and rating involved thousands of alumni, nany of whom hadn't had much contact with Harard in the years since they had graduated. No one, et, was asking them for money. But as they nibbled n desserts they could pick up with their fingers, nd as they chatted with classmates they hadn't seen n years, wheels began to turn. Even if the ratings hey made were sometimes inaccurate, a larger purose was being served. By the time the sessions nded, most of the participants had come to feel they ad a stake in the success of the drive.

FUND-RAISING was not always so scientific. The head of Harvard's annual drive from 1927 to 1964 was David McCord, a member of the class of 1921 and—then as now—the "poet laureate" of Boston. McCord once described Harvard's fund-raising strategy as "fishing with a barbless hook." The college has always believed its case to be so inherently compelling that its appeals for money are usually kept low-key. A typical McCord solicitation was an elegant little essay, printed as a brochure, in which reader joined author for a thousand-word ramble through Thoreau and Ogden Nash in order to arrive at a discreet appeal for funds cast in the verse of Richard Armour:

> *Shake and shake the catsup bottle.*
> *None will come, and then a lot'll.*

McCord captured perfectly the Harvard man's cherished image of himself: a thoughtful, witty, and eminently civilized fellow who would jump, when necessary, without being shoved.

McCord's style was just right for those days, and the annual drives he orchestrated were casual fishing expeditions. But in 1957 Harvard's administrators decided to supplement McCord's efforts with something a bit more vigorous, and A Program for Harvard College was born. When Harvard announced its program's goal of $82.5 million, most people's first inclination was to laugh. No other institution had ever tried to raise more than $15 million. But Harvard was adamant about the need. The world was growing faster than Harvard was, and Harvard needed to forge ahead.

Harvard has always viewed its mission in global, if not in cosmic, terms. When the Soviet Union launched the world's first artificial satellite shortly after the program got under way, President Nathan Pusey took up the challenge. "If we are to learn anything from Sputnik," he said, "it is that we should vastly increase the share of the national product which we devote to education."

Harvard took its case to the world in 1958 with an hour-long radio broadcast heard all over the globe. The broadcast, which, in the words of *The New York Times*, was "studded with intellectual stars," was essentially an advertisement for the fund drive. Participants included John F. Kennedy, Robert Frost, John P. Marquand, Leonard Bernstein, and Alan Jay Lerner.

Harvard's pitch was so effective that even the president of Carleton College, not himself a Harvard man, was moved to kick in a hundred dollars. Closer to home, Harvard peppered alumni with inspirational brochures. One of them contained a letter from Mary Chase, author of *Harvey*, the prize-winning Broadway play about a six-foot-tall invisible rabbit. Ms. Chase's son Colin was a Harvard graduate. "Harvard has proven such an experience for us," Colin's mother wrote, "that I have taken down my Pulitzer Prize and put his diploma there instead. It means more to me. I cannot help this." Another pamphlet, directed to the secretaries of alumni volunteers, was called "How to treat your Boss when He's raising money for Harvard." A drawing in the pamphlet showed an earnest secretary stoutly kicking her employer in the butt to remind him of his duty to his alma mater.

With the help of college presidents, playwrights, and secretaries, A Program for Harvard College met its ambitious goal. As President Pusey had predicted, the effects of that success were felt throughout the American educational system. Other institutions quickly realized that, with the proper planning and the proper pitch, they too could raise enormous sums. The era of the big-league capital drive had begun.

In keeping with the cold-war fervor of its time, A Program for Harvard College was decidedly expansionist in its aim; much of the money raised went into the construction of new buildings. The nation was gearing up to meet the Soviet challenge, and so was Harvard. A quarter century later, in the waning days of the republic, Harvard sounded a different note in making its appeal: the Harvard

Campaign would be a plan to harden silos, not build new missiles.

"In launching this drive," President Bok announced in October 1979, "we do not intend to expand the size of the University, but to maintain and enhance its quality." The $250 million, Bok said, would be used almost exclusively to bolster faculty salaries and to finance student aid.

But Bok expressed no doubt that $250 million for Harvard was just what this troubled world needed: "In a world where knowledge and human talent count so heavily," he said, "there are endless contributions to be made by a university that commands so large a portion of the ablest students and so distinguished a company of scientists and scholars. Indeed, if we wonder at times what any one of us can do to help resolve the nation's problems, surely Harvard provides a promising leverage point from which to begin."



"Great tea—and thanks for the remainder unitrust. I promise we'll only use it for nice things."

One of the central themes of the Harvard Campaign is the concept of "stretching." Alumni are not to make just any old gift to Harvard; if the goal is to be reached, the gifts must be extraordinary. "I just made my pledge today," Theodore W. Stedman, class of 1933, told a Harvard gathering. "Frankly, it was for a lot more than I thought it would be, and I'm still shaking. But I do hope you will all consider doing the same." Graduates who are uncertain about how far they need to stretch might consult the "Barnes Formula," a calculation invented by Bernard Barnes, class of 1930, for A Program for Harvard College: "Take the largest gift you have ever made to any cause in any single year, double it, and give this amount each year for three to five years."

The Barnes Formula indicates where Harvard ranks itself in the hierarchy of admirable causes. In order to bring its alumni around to a similar view, the college cultivates and pampers them very attentively. The development office keeps scrupulous track of even the most seemingly minor details. When Derek Bok fires off a letter to Mr. John Doe, class of whatever, does he salute him as "John" or as "Mr. Doe"? The development office remembers. Does John Doe enjoy an occasional sail in the Caribbean? The development office knows. Does he collect expressionist paintings? It's all in the files.

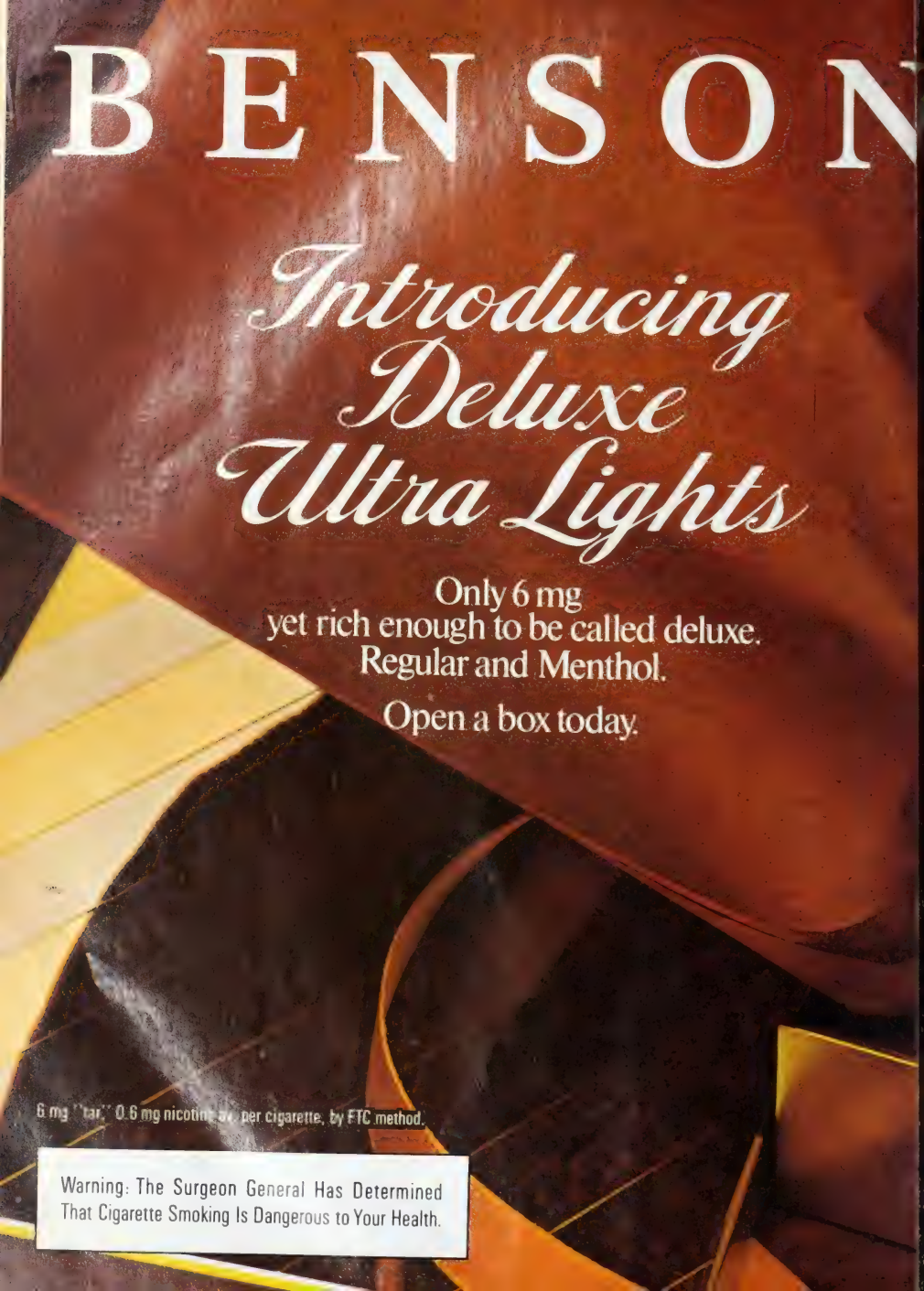
During the campaign's planning period, selected alumni who were expected to make large gifts were invited to attend special gatherings for the purpose of discussing the prospects of the forthcoming campaign. An alumnus in, say, St. Louis might receive an invitation from, say, David Rockefeller asking him to join Derek Bok, Donald Regan, and a few other luminaries for a luncheon in New York. "The real purpose of the lunch," says one participant, "wasn't really to ask our opinion on how Harvard should present its case; it was to get everybody involved." Most of these people understood what was going on. But, far from being offended, they came away mightily impressed. When a man has a few million dollars to give away, he wants to give them to an institution that doesn't shillyshally around.

Like all big fund-raising drives, the Harvard Campaign actually began seeking pledges well before the official start. Most of these advance gifts were solicited from people expected to come up with more than a million dollars, including the campaign's own Executive Committee, mere membership in which implied a willingness to make a very substantial gift. The purpose of the advance drive was to accumulate a large nest egg to demonstrate to lesser alumni that the campaign was serious and that it stood a good chance of succeeding. By announcement day, Harvard had $53 million in hand, more than 20 percent of the ultimate goal.

After the opening gun came the Leadership Phase, which, as the name implies, was aimed at major prospects. The Leadership Phase began in October 1979 and continued all through 1980. Since a major gift has a gestation period of about a year and a half, from initial solicitation to solid commitment, the Leadership Phase will actually run through the entire five years of the Harvard Campaign, concurrent with other efforts. Solicitation is aimed at

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the 1,912 alumni rated at $100,000 and above. It is handled by a central Major Gifts Committee, whose 200 members travel all over the country to make individual appeals.

Before soliciting a major prospect, campaign strategists zero in on his true potential. Ratings aren't specific enough. In order to refine them, Harvard relies on business directories, proxy statements, friends, and other sources of public and private information. At this point, says Robert G. Stone, Jr., class of 1945, one of the campaign's three national co-chairmen, Harvard wants to know "not only how much they're worth, but also where their real interest in the college might lie. If there is some special identity they have had with the college—in nominal gifts they have made to the department of astronomy, or to science, or to athletics, or to something else—we focus on that."

Harvard provides solicitors with complete reports on individual prospects. The reports are assembled in the development office and used as guides by the Major Gifts Committee. If a solid major prospect expresses an interest in, say, the Fogg Art Museum, a convivial fine-arts professor may be rustled up to have a chat with him. Even more important, the reports help the committee decide who should approach each prospect and make sure the solicitor knows as much as possible about him, his circumstances, and his interests. In some cases, more than one solicitor is used.

Making an extraordinary gift to a major fund drive is like "hitting the wall" in a marathon; it hurts at first, but then a sort of euphoria sets in. Harvard solicitors stress the fact that handing over a major chunk of capital can feel *good*.

To add to the fun, Harvard gives big donors the chance to immortalize themselves or their loved ones with their gifts. Most major prospects receive a brochure called "The Names of Harvard," a handsome publication filled with pictures of people whose names live on in various Harvard landmarks. Here is the Aga Khan, "Imam of the Ismaili Moslems from 1883 until his death in 1957," who endowed a professorship in Iranian studies. And here, standing beside his dog, is William Lyon Mackenzie King, former prime minister of Canada, whose friends gave a professorship in his name. Tucked in an inside flap of the booklet is a smaller one, called "Opportunities for Named Gifts," a sort of shopping list for would-be immortals. $3 million will buy an endowment for Memorial Church. A million and a half will pay for an interdisciplinary university professorship. A mere $5,000 will pay for something called a "revolving loan fund." Another publication reveals that a gift of $5 million will entitle a donor to *re*name the Yenching Library (Harvard's Chinese studies collection), quite possibly a charitable cause in itself.

Tax considerations may not be a "prime mover" in contributions, but Harvard maintains an expert staff of financial analysts to advise alumni on *how* to make gifts. The analysts are assisted by a computer programmed by two young whizzes from the class of 1980. The computer gobbles up information about a prospect's financial situation and then suggests a giving program.

The options Harvard offers are varied and sometimes extremely complicated. Donors can establish lead trusts, remainder unitrusts, deferred gift annuities, or any of a host of other plans. Each plan has different tax and income consequences. Some plans enable donors to give principal and keep interest, others to give interest and keep principal. Harvard also operates several pooled-income funds that provide free financial management for the donors while they live and a substantial eventual return for Harvard. Alumni can take out irrevocable life-insurance policies naming Harvard as beneficiary. Simple bequests are also allowed, although the proceeds are counted in the drive total only if the donor is loyal enough to die before the end of the campaign.

EARLY IN 1981, the Harvard Campaign shifted its emphasis to the two-year Regional Phase, a step-by-step effort to solicit less than major prospects in seventy-six cities around the country. Like Sherman's army, the regional campaign moves intact from one chunk of territory to the next. By the time the Regional Phase ends in December 1982, roughly 15,000 rated prospects will have been solicited face-to-face.

By far the largest part of the Regional Phase, in terms of the number of people involved, is a telephone campaign directed at the 40,000 alumni rated at less than $5,000. Harvard's "telethons" are casual but carefully orchestrated affairs in which groups of alumni get together to solicit their friends and classmates by phone. Harvard provides each volunteer with a placemat-sized information sheet that tells him everything from the campaign credo ("Harvard is not as wealthy as most alumni believe") to the fact that "80 percent of those reached will answer by the fourth ring." The information sheet also includes a sample conversation script and reminds the solicitor that a successful call has four parts: Open, Engage, Ask, and Close.

Harvard's telethons have been extraordinarily successful, far exceeding the expectations of the campaign's planners. During the planning phase, Harvard estimated that its telephone drives would bring in a little less than $8.5 million. The estimate was based on the experiences of other schools, primarily Stanford and Yale. But after less than a third of the time allotted, Harvard discovered that it had already raised $5.5 million over the phone.

Just as in all military operations, maintaining troop morale is of paramount importance. For Harvard, this task is made somewhat simpler by the legendary loyalty of the college's alumni. One of the

campaign's most effective props is a ten-minute, student-made film whose opening and closing segments consist of half a dozen different musical groups performing the song "Ten Thousand Men of Harvard (Want Victory Today)." The film almost invariably brings tears to its viewers' eyes.

The most effective pitch, virtually all solicitors say, is simply to state the college's case: Harvard wants to raise faculty salaries, Harvard wants to maintain student aid, Harvard wants to repair its aging facilities, and, in connection with all of the above, Harvard wants to set the pace for the rest of the nation. Most alumni have to be persuaded that Harvard actually needs the money, but in the end they tend to find the argument persuasive, and the pitch works very well. Early studies of giving patterns revealed that alumni were making campaign pledges that averaged well over one hundred times the size of their usual annual gifts.

At a certain point in any lengthy fund drive, however, mere urgency of need begins to lose its force as an argument for giving. Five years is a long time to make anyone believe that an institution is teetering on the rim of doom. If a drive is to be successful, it must eventually take on a momentum of its own; as the drive begins to approach its goal, the mere thought of success can, and should, become a potent motivating force. This is why fund-raisers so often construct those silly cardboard thermometers. Will we meet our goal? Will we clobber Yale? People sometimes kick in money for the simple joy of seeing the mercury move a little higher.

Giving doesn't slacken at the end of a drive; on the contrary, if the graph of a campaign's progress strays from its usual trajectory, the movement tends to be upward. This is what happened to Yale in the final months of its drive; alumni made an extraordinary last effort and pushed it over the top. The campaign's goal eventually exerted its own gravitational pull on giving. And the same thing happened to Harvard, although it happened considerably earlier.

Harvard's fund-raising graph began to rise above its projected path in the second year of the campaign. In short order the campaign's planners realized that the university was taking in so much money so fast that the chart of its receipts had moved onto an entirely new trajectory. That trajectory pointed straight at $350 million. The Reagan administration, in the meantime, had provided a convenient reason for raising the campaign's goal. By failing to put a cap on inflation, and by slashing student aid, the government had rendered the original goal inadequate. $250 million just wouldn't cover the bill anymore, campaign strategists decided. An additional $100 million would be needed. Raising the target to $350 million, as Harvard did in June, gave alumni volunteers a brand-new target to shoot for. Even the *debate* over whether to raise the goal was beneficial to the drive. Lengthy letters went out to key alumni, making them feel more deeply involved than ever. Opinions were solicited. Meetings were held. Harvard could have raised the target without telling a soul beforehand, but stretching the decision-making process over most of a year made everyone begin to think about being more generous, and more than a dozen major givers doubled their original pledges. Upping the ante at the midpoint of the campaign was like starting a brand-new drive.



"That's a very unusual and provocative philosophy, Mr. Hayne, and while we couldn't guarantee it would be taught, we certainly could guarantee your name on a philosophy chair."

I AM ASHAMED to admit that I have not yet made good on my own modest pledge to the Harvard Campaign. The main reason for my negligence is probably sloth, but there are other reasons as well.

Even Harvard graduates are sensible enough to wonder whether Harvard really needs this money. "It's a question somebody always has on his mind initially," says Fred Glimp. Harvard, after all, is the richest university in the land. The University of Texas is gaining fast on Harvard's billion-and-a-half-dollar stockpile, but nobody else comes very close. Yale's endowment is a mere $800 million.

Harvard makes a plausible case that its funds are insufficient. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Harvard College and the Graduate School of Arts and

Sciences) has access to only 40 percent of the university's total endowment, a mere 28 percent of which is unrestricted. CalTech, Princeton, and Wellesley all have more endowment per student than Harvard does, as do a couple of venerable New England prep schools. The Reagan administration alone is already costing Harvard more than a million dollars a year, the equivalent of $20 million in endowment.

Furthermore, the specific goals of the Harvard Campaign are hard to oppose. College professors really aren't paid well enough, and it would be unfortunate if private colleges and universities were forced to limit their admissions to only those students who could actually afford to pay. (Room, board, and tuition at Harvard next year will cost $11,475.) The shopping list for the Harvard Campaign is admirably free of frills.

So Harvard's designs on my money seem quite worthwhile compared with the ways I might spend it myself. But that's not the only relevant comparison. What about other places I might give it to? Does Harvard "need" my money more than, say, a struggling black college in the South? Aware that this line of reflection may make Harvard's need look pretty relative pretty quickly, the university argues that a contribution to Harvard benefits far more than just Harvard. Whether in arrogance or in wisdom, Harvard believes that it plays a crucial leadership role in the nation and even the world. It's easy to agree

FUND-RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS

1957

Harvard has traditionally been on the cutting edge of philanthropic technique. In the late Fifties, the brochure "How To Treat Your Boss When He's Raising Money for Harvard" offered the secretaries of Harvard fund-raisers these helpful hints:



Remind Him of Dates

*Your boss, like most Harvardmen, is a pretty busy man. You can help him a lot by reminding him in plenty of time about dates he's going to make through this fall . . .

*Your boss and some of his Harvard friends will go through the Status Slips to see what names they will solicit . . .

Keep His Records

*Check with your boss re invitations to first meeting Sept. 30. Determine form of invitation and send to workers. Make reservations for meeting place . . .

*About 10 days before, remind your boss to notify workers to attend. You handle mailings and possibly phone calls.

*Two or three days before meeting, remind your boss to telephone to workers not heard from. Perhaps you can do this for him.



About Dec. 16

*(By this time, you are running the campaign anyway! Merry Christmas!)

*And that reminds us . . . Thanks a million (or 82.5 million!) for what you are doing to help a Program for Harvard College.

1982

Modern high-tech philanthropy leaves nothing to chance—or the boss's secretary. Alumni who solicit funds in Harvard's current "telethon" campaign are given preprinted placemat-sized sheets telling them precisely how the campaign's computers expect them to raise $350 million, including:

What Can You Expect? . . .

*The response will be warm and generous.

*You will reach 80% of those you call.

*80% of those reached will answer by the fourth ring.

*You will complete ten solicitations in two hours.

Solicitation Hints . . .

*Open. Engage. Ask and Close. These four steps sum up what solicitation is all about.

*Each person has recently received three Campaign mailings . . .

*Be personal. . . .

*Take your time. Listen. Don't rush the conversation. Be alert to the large gift.

After The Call

*Complete the "Campaign Decision" section of the Calling Card. Be precise . . .

*Fill out the Pledge Confirmation Card. . . .

*Add a personal "P.S." Clip the Confirmation and Calling Card together and place them in front of you for a staff member to pick up. Move on to the next call.

with Derek Bok that the American educational system is in trouble. It's harder to agree that the best way to begin dealing with that trouble is to give money to Harvard. Since Harvard states its own case in these extremely ambitious terms, a prospective donor is entitled to examine the Harvard Campaign in a similarly expansive frame of mind.

There is no doubt that Harvard's claims of leadership are justified. Raising the salaries of Harvard professors very likely *will* have a salubrious effect on the salaries of professors all over the country. Harvard is simply the most visible university in the nation. It is also probably true that the size and (probable) success of the Harvard Campaign will give a boost to other money-seeking institutions. A Program for Harvard College, in the 1950s, really did have a dramatic effect on fund-raising in this country. The recent campaigns for Stanford and Yale might not have been possible without it, just as the Harvard Campaign would have been more difficult without them. Every time a major institution succeeds in raising a lot of money, Harvard officials say, raising money becomes a little easier for everybody else. Within definite limits (after all, for example, there is only so much money in the world), this is almost certainly true. Big-time philanthropy tends to be habit-forming, not just for those who receive but also for those who give.

In making other claims for itself, though, Harvard is on shakier ground. One of the arguments Harvard officials make most often is that Harvard's academic example has an uplifting effect on every other educational institution in the country, from Yale right on down to the public high school in South Succotash. There are undoubtedly a great many high school students in the country and even the world who hit the books harder because they want to go to Harvard. But the problems most school systems face have nothing to do with a dearth of ennobling examples. Harvard's leadership argument in this case is really just the educational equivalent of trickle-down economics.

Harvard doesn't need to look any farther than its own backyard to see the major weakness in its argument. The Boston public school system is one of the very worst in the nation, and being next door to Harvard didn't prevent it from racking up a $38 million deficit last year, even before it felt the effect of $7 million in federal cuts. Since Harvard traditionally receives a large proportion of its student body from Boston and its environs, the university would seem to have at least a casual stake in the matter. It's hard to say exactly what Harvard should do about Boston's problems, but at least it ought not to claim that it's helping out merely by being so good, and so rich.

Boston's problems are shared by many other cities in the country—altogether their school systems lost half a billion dollars in federal financing last year and may lose nearly two and a half billion more by 1984—and this fact points up another weakness in Harvard's case. While Harvard is to be admired for seeking to guarantee financial help to any needy student who is admitted, the crisis in public secondary education may render the gesture meaningless. If students aren't being educated at the secondary level because their school systems are going broke, help with tuition payments isn't going to do them any good. The question really isn't who can afford to pay, but rather who has learned enough to go.

Even smaller private colleges and universities shouldn't necessarily be ecstatic about the Harvard example. Since few schools have access to the sort of alumni wealth that Harvard does, the college's $350 million example won't really mean very much to them. Harvard says it doesn't compete, since alumni don't overlap, but there are ways in which it does.

Approximately 12 percent of the money Harvard is seeking in its campaign is expected to come from corporations and foundations, which, unlike alumni groups, are solicited by everyone. Their resources are also limited, which means that at any given time a relatively small number of dollars is being chased by a relatively large number of hands. Because corporate leaders tend to be associated with elite institutions, and because corporations—even more than individual givers—like a payoff in prestige for their contributions, a disproportionate share of corporate philanthropy goes to places like Harvard. And the same is true, more or less, of giving by foundations.

It's hard to say what Harvard should do about this without sounding terribly naïve. But at the risk of appearing foolish, I have a modest proposal: why doesn't Harvard get together with, say, Stanford, MIT, and the Ivy League colleges and announce that from now on contributions to those schools from corporations and foundations will no longer be accepted; or, if they are accepted, that the money will be pooled and distributed to schools that otherwise don't have much luck in attracting any. This is the sort of proposal that makes the old and wise thankful that they are old and wise, but it actually fits right in with Harvard's exalted view of itself as the guiding light of American education. If Harvard can extract $8.5 million from John Loeb, why does it need to go knocking on the door of the Rockefeller Foundation, especially when there are plenty of schools that can't?

Harvard will meet its goal and improve its college, and the world may well be a better place because of it. I will undoubtedly make out my own check before the campaign comes to an end, and I may even throw a bit of a stretch into the bargain. Every fund drive makes its appeal to the vanity as well as the conscience of its audience. But it is possible to wish Harvard well without buying its entire argument. Since Harvard's super-deluxe automated panhandling machine doesn't show much capacity for self-restraint, the rest of us have to be sure that we do. ■

GERTRUDE STEIN

A story.

by Tova Reich



OME YEARS AGO in Washington, D.C., Gertrude Stein, who preferred to be known as Trudy, attended a reception at the embassy of a now defunct black African country. The invitation seemed to drop from nowhere and landed with a thin slap on her gray metal desk in the outer chambers of the Office of Education. With not the slightest riff in the stream of her typing, her eyes glided from the memo at her left elbow to the black hand that was now receding into its dazzling scarlet winged sleeve. "Come," said a deep voice above her hair. "Come, come," the chant went on, as, typing steadily, she watched him pass down the aisles between the rows of identical desks, distributing his largesse to one and to all.

As it happened, her father, the old general practitioner, Louis Stein, was out of town that night at a toymakers' convention, so it would not be necessary for Gertrude to return home to cook his dinner. In fact, this was a service he had never requested of her, but it was one that she accepted as her burden soon after her mother died, when she was eleven, and in time her father came to expect it, too. Dr. Stein's office was in the basement of their modest home in Silver Spring. It had grown shabby over the years, as his ambition and his clientele had waned, but a core of faithful old women who believed in his diagnostic powers still made their sighing way down the broken steps for his touch. He had a tender way of comforting them in their ailments, knowing there was no cure. He did not cultivate the aura of those smug young specialists, who pranced about as if they alone would be spared the common and mortal afflictions. To fill the gaps that lengthened between patients, Dr. Stein busied himself inventing elaborate games for children. This became his passion. In the waiting room, on the worn green leather sofa, the ladies still enjoyed a good gossip about Louis Stein's wife. "A difficult woman," they all agreed. "He was mad about her." But for Gertrude, the memory of her mother was through smoke. There was that sepia photograph on her father's bedside table of a sleek, fading stranger, wan and romantic. As a child Gertrude had been admonished to tread lightly outside her mother's door until noon. As long as the sun shone her mother lay stretched out in discontent on the living room couch. When Louis Stein trudged up the stairs in the evening, she would turn her negligéed back to him. He would pour some cold cereal into a bowl and this would be his meal. Sometimes her mother would seize her in such a

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voeful embrace that Gertrude experienced it more is invasion and doom than love. Her mother suffered rom a heart damaged by rheumatic fever in childiood. It was well known that her very life dangled by a hair throughout the nine months that she carried Gertrude. The baby was plucked out unnaturally, ike a weed, in a Caesarian section. Gertrude's nother spent the next eleven years recuperating.

In general, Gertrude preferred not to associate with the other secretaries at work. The reason for his was simple. She had nothing in common with hem. They were a dull, minimally schooled group, B.S. threes and fours in the civil service, clerkypists, actually, whereas she was a five, having completed her education at American University, with a major in early childhood. Their presence in front of a typewriter represented a move upward from housenolds where the men labored with callused hands and sweated in their armpits. They were not even blue collar; they were shirtless. The women went down on their knees to scrub the tiles on other people's bathroom floors. For Gertrude, on the other hand, this position was clearly a descent, but she chose it because it left her soul intact. "It's just a job to me," she said to her friend Bunny Newman, the only woman in the office with whom she had become close. "It's pin money. It doesn't play havoc with my spirit. My spirit is free." Bunny understood. She had had some college and read Irish fairy tales with swimming eyes.

Bunny was already married and, although she did not yet know it, in the first hours of her first pregnancy. Her husband was a cartographer who had just been dispatched to Saigon. In 1963, within a year after this incident, Bunny was gone, having settled with her daughter, Deirdre, in a plain bungalow in Miami's Coconut Grove.

Gertrude and Bunny spent their lunch hours together, at a sandwich counter or shopping the sales at Garfinckel's and Woodies. They shared a few good laughs over tuna on whole wheat. "The language, God!" Bunny would explode, sending a rosette of soggy crumbs over the Formica table. "Were you there the other day?" she cried. "Sandy ran in hollering, 'Jesus, get the nurse. Roberta is cascading.' "

"Oh, no!" Gertrude gasped. Then, suddenly sober, she added, "Well, Roberta is pretty far gone. She won't be able to hide it much longer." Bunny shrugged. "Poor Roberta," Gertrude said. "She sits there listening to the Dictaphone, typing away, struggling, struggling. Every time Dr. Pollack says 'milieu' she types 'mill you.' Rhymes with kill you. Unfortunately for Roberta, milieu is a very hot word in the education business." In short, the two women kept themselves apart. They would not even apply makeup in the same mirror as the others. They allowed the impression that they were above the common vanities. In the bathroom one day Gertrude rubbed a smudge of green eyeshadow into her lids. She sucked in her cheeks and arched her eyebrows, composing herself in the mirror in that special private look she considered her most beguiling. It was already too late when she spotted Roberta's reflection, slouched against the wall, splitting sunflower shells with bladelike teeth. She had been caught in the act. Roberta opened her mouth and laughed, spraying Gertrude with wet seeds.



It was a humid Thursday in late August when the invitations fell their way. The air had to be parted in order to pass through, the dark clouds were teasing. Nevertheless, during their lunch hour, Gertrude and Bunny set out on a long walk up Connecticut Avenue, propelled by the hunting noontime masses, and found themselves at an African boutique, with nothing particular in mind. Phlegmatically, they pushed the garments along the racks. Gertrude pulled out a kaftan in shades of brown and gold. "This would be a great thing to wear to the party tonight," she remarked.

"Don't tell me you're going!" said Bunny.

"No, of course not." Still, Gertrude carried the robe into the dressing room and slipped it on over her clothing. The only stranger she had ever undressed before was the one in the mirror, and despite all their shopping forays, Bunny seldom caught even a glimpse of Gertrude's bra strap.

"It's nice," Bunny said, "very ethnic, like a costume."

"Hmm," said Gertrude, smoothing the cloth along her flanks, "I suppose it would be all right to go if one thought of it as a masquerade."

"I'm not so sure," Bunny said. Gertrude stared at herself, as at a rival. Bunny straddled a wicker stool. "Before he left, Perry told me to go out once in a while. 'Don't sit at home every night moping and missing me,' he said. 'I don't want to come back to a depressed wife.' "

"Do you think he was kidding?" Gertrude wondered.

Bunny sighed. "Well, he's probably relieving himself of his loneliness over there, one way or another," she said.

"Oh, what the hell!" said Gertrude. She decided to have the kaftan. On the way out of the shop, as Gertrude was completing the transaction, Bunny fingered a strand of wooden beads. "How much?" she asked. The clerk examined the tag.

"I don't know, it's hard to read. Forty dollars, I think."

"Forty dollars!" Bunny exclaimed. "That's ridiculous."

"Well, you certainly have expensive tastes," said Gertrude. "Maybe it's from a bewitched tree."

"Wait a minute," the salesgirl said. She looked at it again. "I'm sorry, forty cents." Bunny bought the

necklace. The two women agreed to meet in front of the embassy at seven. "We'll just drop in, see what it's like," said Bunny.

"It's insignificant," Gertrude said. She felt secure in the knowledge that she had washed her hair the night before.

A forked vein of lightning flashed in the sky, a reminder of the hidden vessels of the universe, and the rain was beginning to come down hard. Gertrude and Bunny set their pocketbooks on top of their heads and ran inside. The embassy was in a townhouse on a side street off Massachusetts Avenue. In later years Gertrude passed by it many times without recognizing it. She also preserved a very faint recollection of what its interior was like. There was a rush of crimson and gold, and a memory of large murals of black men with formidable biceps and raised fists. As soon as they entered they were handed paper cups filled with a pink liquid. Gertrude tipped hers back recklessly, emptying it without once releasing its brim from her lips. She had been fasting from the moment she had made the decision to attend this reception, for she valued the gaunt look as her most striking. The drink was cold and sweet. The alcohol rose to the roots of her hair and spread to the tips of her fingers. By the time she finished her second cup, two black men in dashikis had claimed them. After the third cup, there was an ecstatic moment of weightlessness, of emigration, and then the fall. "Passed out," said a person in the distance, perhaps Bunny.

The two men, with Bunny's collapsing assistance, dragged Gertrude into the front hall. "I will take her home," said one of them. His voice had a lilt to it, a tune that kept Gertrude locked in her trance. "Where is her car, please?" He began rummaging through Gertrude's purse for the keys.

"I don't know if we should be doing this," Bunny protested, but she couldn't stop giggling. She slumped against the one who had now become officially designated as hers. That one laid an arm across her shoulder.

"Relax, honey, everything will be beautiful," he said. "He is my friend. I am ready at this time to vouch for him. He is a model husband and father. He is a top executive. He signs all his letters, 'Responsibly yours.' "

"I'm still not so sure it's all right," Bunny said.

"Just be a nice girl, see, and give my friend here directions," said her man. Bunny was refusing, shaking her head from side to side, but then she became so enchanted by the pattern of her movement that she began to use her head to draw greater and greater circles in the soupy air. Soon her entire self danced away into the storm. "Never mind, I have her number," said Gertrude's man. He was waving what appeared to be a credit card or a driver's license. "Now take it slow," he said to Gertrude's sodden body. "Just hold on tight to Daddy. That's my good girl." And he carried her over the threshold.



THE NEXT MORNING Gertrude awoke in her own bed with a disastrous headache and the taste of death in her mouth. Her shoes and panties were on the floor. Her new kaftan was bunched up over her bra, which was still fastened in back, although her breasts had been pushed out from under the cloth. There was a whitish paste on her thighs and blood on her sheet. When she finally got up to smile at herself in the mirror, the white paste cracked over her lips.

Gertrude looked at the clock. "Oh, my God, after nine!" She smacked her forehead with the heel of her palm. Then she sat down to call the office. She wanted to speak to Bunny. Bunny had not yet arrived, she was told. She asked for Roberta. "Hi, baby," Roberta answered cheerily.

"I've been held up," Gertrude said with clenched formality. "I'll be a bit late. Could you sign in for me?"

"Sho' thin', baby. Mornin' sickness, you fancy?" She laughed again. Gertrude hung up. She stepped into the shower and expunged it all, down the drains, into the sewers, into the seas. She rolled up her bedsheet and her clothing of the night before, stuffed them in the washing machine, and set the dial. When she finished dressing, she began to search for her pocketbook. Maybe I left it in the car, she thought. She went out into the driveway. Blank space had replaced her car. She walked across the lawn toward the little post with the sign LOUIS STEIN, M.D. Even as a small girl, after an invigorating feud with the kids on her block, she and those on her side had always regrouped around that pole. It was home base, it recharged her. But it, too, was gone.

Gertrude returned to the office the following Monday and sat down briskly at her desk without greeting anyone. She avoided Bunny purposefully, and she continued working even when the rumble of the coffee wagon could be heard in the corridor, announcing a minor social event and evoking that pleasantly unsettling feeling of something that needed to be done to get the day moving. Dr. Pollack strode in wearing a new three-piece suit and what resembled a string tie. The women appraised this outfit coldly. Dr. Pollack sat down on a chair beside Gertrude's desk and crossed her legs. There was the embarrassingly unprofessional hiss of nylon-encased thighs sliding against each other and sealing. She was holding a grade school textbook. "We missed you on Friday," she said to Gertrude. "Were you sick?" Gertrude shook her head. "Is everything all right?" Dr. Pollack inquired.

"I was robbed," said Gertrude. "They took everything." Helen Pollack shook her head. Briefly, she described the burglary some months back of her own home in Northwest. "I felt violated," she said. "It took quite a while before I could once again feel

hat what I had was really mine." Gertrude nodded. Dr. Pollack asked Gertrude to reserve a seat for her n a flight to Georgia. "I've got to jump down there nmediately to wake those old boys up," she exlained. "Civil rights is here to stay. It's a fact of fe, like the birds and the bees. If they want the ole, they'd better hop to it." She opened the book n her lap. "Just look at this!" she declared, tapping picture of a group of children at play. There were hree whites in the illustration and one black, but he black child had pink arms. "Very cynical stuff, vouldn't you say? They can do better than that, hose lousy publishers. It's a disgrace." She waited, esting Gertrude's reaction. "I have a special job for ou," she told Gertrude. "It's obvious that you're a ut above the other girls in this office. With time nd effort, and, of course, with my support and enouragement, you can even be fitted into the slot f administrative assistant, a seven or maybe even a ine. I have no doubt. Trudy, did you notice that uge pile of textbooks in my office? I want you to o through all of them. Check each and every illustration. The rule is, every picture showing a bunch f children must contain one black face, and not nly the face. A black in every family, that's our notto." Helen Pollack grinned. She rose efficiently. She had the look of a busy person who was taking ime out to perform an amenity. Gertrude could nly be grateful. "You know, Trudy," she said, "I'm eally sorry about what happened to you. But there's nothing like plunging yourself into work to get your nind off your troubles. It's the best therapy, believe me, especially if the work is for a noble cause."

Bunny took to leaving cute little notes on Gertrude's desk. *"Hi there. Remember me?"*; *"Let's be friends. Okay?"*; *"I'm lonely. Wish you were here."*; *"Don't be cruel to a heart that's true."* The last was illustrated with a weeping valentine. The others were decorated with flowers and smiling faces. Gertrude crumpled them up audibly and tossed them into the wastebasket, where they unfolded slightly, as if they were alive. Then one day Bunny stepped into the toilet cubicle alongside the one in which Gertrude was sitting. "I know you're in there, Trudy," she said. "I recognize your shoes. We bought them together at Hahn's." Gertrude tried to halt the flow of her stream. "This is it, Trudy," said Bunny. "You'd better talk to me or I'm going to crawl under and look at you."

"Just leave me alone," said Gertrude, "I don't want to have anything more to do with you."

"Why? What did I do? Tell me what I did and I'll never bother you again." Gertrude was in the midst of an episode that was absolutely impossible to interrupt. There was no decent escape.

"I can't believe you don't know," she said.

Bunny said, "Sure I know. You're in tight and cozy with Pollack and you don't want to mix with us inferiors, right?"

"You're out of your mind, Bunny."

"I'm warning you," said Bunny, "I'm going to climb up on this toilet seat right now and peek."

"We can't talk about it here," Gertrude said. "Somebody might be listening."

"I don't give a damn," Bunny cried. She ran out of her booth and set her body against Gertrude's door. "Talk fast or you're stuck in there for life."

Gertrude tried to squeeze under the partition, but there were puddles on both sides. She soon gave up. She noticed a pair of swollen black ankles at the far end of the row. "Okay, okay," said Gertrude in a grief-stricken whisper. "It's just that I can't believe a true friend would ever have thrown me to the dogs the way you did."

"What are you talking about?"

"You know what I'm talking about," Gertrude said. "You allowed that Negro from the embassy to take me home when I was helpless, knocked out cold. He stole my car, he stole my purse, he stole my father's signpost. And I'll tell you something else, he raped me as part of the package."

"How do you know?"

"Look, Bunny," and here Gertrude laughed bitterly, "a rape is a rape is a rape. There were certain unmistakable signs. I don't want to go into it.

"And for your information," Gertrude went on, her voice rising jaggedly, "I was in my fertile period. I took my temperature that morning and it was elevated. If I get pregnant, whom will I have to blame? I'm already three weeks late, and it's your fault, Bunny, your fault! I'll have to commit suicide, or maybe, if I'm lucky, my father will find out and he'll do me a favor and kill me." Gertrude began to cry helplessly, flushing the toilet again and again to drown her wails.



On the way back from the toymakers' convention, Louis Stein passed right by his own home. His natural absentmindedness had run rampant over the years, and without the signpost, upon which he had always relied, he failed to recognize the house. He scratched his head and instructed the taxi driver to go on. "I don't know," he said self-mockingly, "it used to be here somewhere. It's funny, but I think I'm lost." They circled the area for a while until finally he gave up and requested to be dropped off at an unfamiliar corner. He opened his wallet and checked his address on his identification card. In one hand he was carrying his old plaid canvas satchel and in the other a pink plastic attaché case with the words "Barbie Is Off on a Career." It was a promotional item distributed by Mattel, and it was filled with giveaways and samples that he had collected for Gertrude. The prize was a miniature mental ward devised by a company that had made its fortune in doctor sets.

He was so engrossed in displaying the loot to his

daughter that he scarcely paid attention when Gertrude reported the robbery. "My car, my bag, your signpost, everything," she said softly. What he felt was a dim sadness that Gertrude was not sharing his enthusiasm over the treasures. But when he finished he looked at her face for the first time and noticed the two long strands of tears. "What happened, Gertie? Tell me," he cried, utterly alarmed. She repeated her tale. "It's nothing, nothing," he said consolingly, restraining himself from embracing her, for, after all, she was already a mature woman. "They're just things. What do things matter anyway? Things can be replaced. We might even be insured. I'll have to check. The main point is you weren't hurt. Now smile for me, honey, and enjoy these wonderful toys." Gertrude bowed her head. Dr. Stein zipped open his suitcase. "Look what I have!" he said. He was holding up a large shingle, stained in wood tones and painted with garlands of brightly colored flowers. "See what it says," Dr. Stein exclaimed. Gertrude saw: "Papa Louie Stein, Toymaker." She smiled. "That's better," her father said. "I never cared for that pompous old signpost anyhow!" Last of all he pulled out a red stocking cap with a fluffy white pom-pom at the tail and drew it down low over his brow. "Makes me look like Santa Claus, right?" Gertrude laughed out loud.

But as the days passed it was clear to Louis Stein that his daughter was not happy. She slept too much and ate too little. Classical symptoms, Dr. Stein concluded. Well, who is happy on this planet? But for his own child he had hoped for better. Her unhappiness was a calamity, an outcome to be dreaded. He had tried his best over the years, but it had not been easy with no woman in the house. He was an innately diffident man, and even after a lifetime of medical practice, and after years of being entrusted with the most shameful secrets, the color still rose to his cheeks when it became necessary, in the course of taking a history, to ask the most intimate of questions. So around the time that he figured his daughter should begin menstruating, he would discreetly leave little pamphlets on her dresser, which had been sent to him by the drug companies specializing in painkillers. Let the professionals explain it to her, he reflected with relief. "Very Personally Yours," they were called, or "Now You Are a Woman," and their covers were illustrated with a single long-stemmed red rose. Very feminine, Dr. Stein assumed.

He was never sure Gertrude was wearing the right sort of underwear. Who was there to guide her? She had been wretched and overweight as a teenager, and on one occasion he had had the misfortune to notice her walking down the street, slowly, aimlessly, joylessly gobbling down one chocolate bar after another. He hid in a doorway. His heart was broken. On the rare occasions that she would confide in him he tried earnestly to help her. Once she had told him that Molly, a school pal, was tormenting her with stories of a mad telephone caller who would declare in a frightening accent, "Inform your friend Gertrude Stein that she has a preposterous name and that I am going to kill her immediately if not sooner." Then there would be a click and morbid stillness. Dr. Stein had said, "Just tell Molly to ask this idiot to call you directly so you can discuss what he has against you. Then, while you're keeping him busy on the phone, I'll run to the corner, get hold of the police, and have them trace the call." This miserable drama dragged on for weeks.

"Molly said the man agreed to call me," Gertrude reported. But the call to the Stein house never came, and Molly continued with her grim account of these nightly threats. "Tell Molly that he phoned you," Dr. Stein had finally advised. A week later Gertrude glumly announced that, according to Molly, the calls had ceased. Father and daughter concluded that the entire affair had been brewed in Molly's vengeful imagination. But secretly Louis Stein wondered if it had not all been the pathetic fiction of his own child, her perverse gift to him to pacify his entreaty that she share her problems with him. Or perhaps she was punishing him for calling her Gertrude, after his mother. It was such an unfashionable name, and, coupled with Stein, it was nothing less than a joke. "Don't worry," he used to reassure her, "you'll get married someday and your last name will be changed." Now, after the robbery, she was sadder and more reclusive than ever. There were mornings when he could hear her in the bathroom, crying, choking, gagging above the rush of running water. "What's wrong, Gertie?" he would plead from behind the door. "I want to help you."

"I'm all right," she would reply. "Just go away."



THERE WAS no one for Gertrude to turn to in her plight but Bunny. The friendship was patched up with troubled threads. Their lunch hours were spent together on the cooling autumnal grass of Lafayette Park, chewing and rechewing the catastrophe. "The main thing is to find out for sure," Bunny kept saying.

But Gertrude just shook her head. "I'm not married. It would be too humiliating," she said.

"You could use a pseudonym."

"Like Gertrude Stein, for instance?"

"Look, Trudy, this mess is partly my fault," said Bunny. "I was soused, true, but I still feel guilty." She offered to deliver a bottle of Gertrude's urine to be tested at a local laboratory. "I'll give it in under my own name," said Bunny. "I'm married, after all. I'm legit." Gertrude reluctantly agreed. The next day she handed Bunny a brown paper bag containing a jar wrapped up in nearly half a roll of toilet paper, filled with her first voiding of the morning. Bunny, who was also experiencing certain symptoms, opened the bag with her nose averted and placed a

ottle of her own alongside her friend's. Sentence as passed a few days later: positive.

Their lunchtime meetings became more and more antic and desperate. What was there to be done? ne could mysteriously disappear for the duration of er pregnancy, have the baby, and then surrender it r adoption, or dump it in a trash can, or abandon as a foundling on a prosperous doorstep. But who ould cherish such a black bundle? Or she could onfine herself to her home until her hour drew near id postpone for the meanwhile the decision of how dispose of the suffering protoplasm. Or she could mp out of a window at H.E.W., embarrassing her periors and littering the sidewalk. Each of these otions was rejected. Each would drive a spike rough her father's heart. The last resort was to ek out an abortionist in the dismal alleys of the ty. This was both terrifying and criminal, but it as the only course available to them.

That afternoon the two women followed Roberta's addle to the ladies' room. "Roberta!" Bunny called ut in a strained voice. Startled, the black woman wiveled around, clutching her swelling belly. "Don' vah do dat agin', you heah?" Roberta cried. "You care da shit outta me. My kid gonna come out wid big ugly white spot on his ass, shape of a spider."

"We're sorry," said Gertrude, "but we need to alk to you."

"Well, you just gonna haveta wait. Junior here s campin' on my pee sack. I gotta go." Roberta tepped into a stall and for a long time Gertrude nd Bunny stood like petitioners outside her door, nduring her groans as part of the fee. "That sho' vas a good one," Roberta sighed when she finally eappeared. Gertrude hung back while Bunny briefy sketched the outline of the case. Roberta's laughter rebounded off the tiles. "Oh, my Lord, you sho' got knock up but good. Who da lucky guy?" But Gertrude merely shook her head. Roberta said, yes, he was acquainted with an abortion lady, her own aunt, as a matter of fact, name of Virtue. "That ain' her real name, course."

"Why don't you use her?" Bunny dared to ask.

Roberta seemed shocked. "Oh, Virtue, she high class. She don' do it for us colored folk," said Roberta.

A baby-blue Cadillac picked Gertrude up at the designated street corner somewhere near St. Elizabeths Hospital. She was sped blindfolded along a curved and twisting route, hurled from one side of the car to the other through what she surmised was the southeast section of the city. The car stopped and she was shoved out violently and steered up several flights of creaking stairs by what felt like a man's large hand propping up her rump. She heard a door slam behind her. The cloth was removed from her eyes. Before her sat a blurry, massive woman with only a few coils of hair on her head and two or three yellow teeth in her mouth. This was Virtue. Her bloated feet were resting on the lap of a man with a stocking drawn grotesquely over his face. Black or white, Gertrude could not distinguish. "Footstool," Virtue called him. His was the role of go-between. All communication had to be filtered through him. His voice was muffled and there was a wet stain on the nylon where his mouth must have been. The room contained a long, low table scarred with knife cuts and carved with hearts and initials. Along the peeling walls were piles and piles of pocketbooks. There was also a bathtub, "to drown the little 'F,' " the man said, "in case he comes out kicking. 'F' stands for fetus. You're here to murder," he said, "and don't you forget it!" She was ordered to hand over her purse. It was turned upside down and all its contents dumped and displayed on the floor. Footstool kicked aside her personal effects, found the five hundred dollars agreed upon in advance, and passed them to Virtue, who lifted one haunch slightly, expelled some gas, slipped the bills underneath, and resettled herself on top of them.

Gertrude was told to strip and lie down on the table with her butt at the edge. Footstool lowered Virtue's legs and pushed the table up to the old woman. He set a chair on either side of Virtue and placed one of Gertrude's legs on each, with the knee bent. "You just get used to that position," Footstool said to Gertrude. "Miss Virtue here needs to pause for some sustenance." He brought over a bowl of gruel. Virtue lowered her head and mumbled what must have been grace, or perhaps it was a prayer for guidance and forgiveness. Footstool began to feed the woman, one patient spoonful after another. When Virtue was finished eating, Footstool squatted down alongside Gertrude. "Pick your poison," he said. He showed her what seemed to have once been a coathanger, another object that resembled a poker, and a plastic bag filled with a liquid that looked, to Gertrude's dazed eyes, as if it had guppies swimming inside. "Saline solution," Footstool explained. "Our deluxe model. Smokes the little critter out in no time. Suffocates him, whammo! Cuts off his lifeline—very elegant-like." There was nothing for Gertrude to say. "Okay," said Footstool, "we'll let the experts decide. Now slide down the table and keep those legs apart." Gertrude could feel Virtue's husky breathing upon her. Then there was a thud, and the old woman's wheezing stopped. Could she have dropped dead at such a time? Gertrude wondered. There was a knock at the door. Gertrude made out the heavy tread of several men. Three or four, maybe. Footstool rose and offered them some beer. They stood around behind her head, drinking, joking, belching, conversing in deep tones. She could not make out what they were saying. Every once in a while, Footstool would turn to Gertrude's zone and admonish her, "Now don't start letting those legs swing together." One of the men suggested a quick game of poker. Gertrude could hear the slapping of cards and the jingling of coins. When they were gone Footstool turned his attention

back to Gertrude. He said, "Before she begins the dirty work, Miss Virtue wants to know how it happened." Gertrude whispered the information in a single word. "Rape," Footstool shouted in Virtue's ear. Just then the phone rang. Gertrude could hear Footstool's end. "Well, well, well, how've you been? . . . It's been a long time for sure . . . How's Thelma doing? How're the little ones? . . . Good, good . . . And Rufus, how's he? . . . And Reggie? . . . And the twins, Dewey and Louie? . . . And how's your ma? Still collecting, I hope . . . And how're the girls, Lulubelle, Lucinda, and Latrina? Did I get them all right? . . . And how's Coco? . . . And Shorty? . . . And Wilbur? . . . Edgar? . . . Calvin? . . . Arthur? . . . Obie and Desdemona? Still together? . . . Milly? . . . Yvette? . . ." When he hung up at last Footstool said to Gertrude, "Miss Virtue wants all the disgusting details." So Gertrude summarized her story. "Embassy party, dead drunk," he relayed in a scream. Footstool said, "Miss Virtue wants to know which embassy." Gertrude mumbled some words. He barked out the answer, "African. Developing country." Footstool said, "Miss Virtue wants to know if the perpetrator was of the Negro persuasion." Gertrude nodded her head. "One of ours," he yelled in the old woman's deaf ears. Footstool said, "Miss Virtue says to grab your clothes and get the hell out of here. She don't kill black babies. Only whites."



ERTRUDE fled, holding her despised rags over her nakedness. She dressed in panic in the stairwell. Outside, in the dangerous streets, she waited a long while before a passing cab would stop for her. When it reached her home she ran inside and brought out the money to pay the fare. She went to the medicine cabinet and took out a bottle of Darvon. She counted out thirty pills and lined them up in a straight row on her bed. Then she fell asleep beside them, fully clothed. Her father entered her room and removed her shoes. He collected the tablets and then proceeded to empty the cupboards of all drugs, razors, knives, ropes, and every possible instrument of annihilation. He sat down at her schoolgirl's desk. "My poor child, what can I do for you?" he wrote. "Anything, anything at all. Just tell me and I will do it. This is the reason: I love you." He left the note on her pillow, and beside it a small toy, a glass globe with a frozen skater inside. When you shook it the spell broke. The snowflakes tumbled, the bells tinkled, and the girl danced in bliss.

Gertrude's sleep was raucous with dreams. She was standing on top of a hill, holding the hand of a small girl. Was it on the Mall? But she could not remember ever having seen a hill there. Still, something resembling the Washington Monument shot up in the distance. The little girl called it the big pencil. Who was this girl? Herself, the child? All around them men and women were flying kites in complete silence. Her own kite was black, in the shape of a bat. The child mounted it. Gertrude began to run, unraveling the string. The kite soared higher and higher, over the treetops, into the clouds. "Let her go," the child sang. The kite vanished into the pale shadow of the moon. She woke up, moaning and bereft. Sleep devoured her again. Her father was in a playground. It looked like Candy Cane City, but not exactly. He was swinging on a swing. She was pushing him, or perhaps it was not she, perhaps it was Bunny Newman. "Pump! Pump!" she shouted at him. The chains of the swing began to wind around the horizontal peppermint-stick bar, until her father was perched gleefully on top. "Come on up," he called to her. "The air is breezy with the flapping of moth wings." "No, no," she cried out loud, casting herself into wakefulness. Again she was beset by dreams. She was squashed behind a bookcase. Her job was to examine every volume. She could hear Dr. Pollack's clipped voice: "Don't miss a single one. Equal time, fair play, balance, balance." Whenever Darwin's theory of evolution was expounded in a textbook and there was an accompanying picture of an ape, her task was to check and make sure that the facing page showed a scene from the six days of creation. Aha! Here was an offender—a solitary simian. She stared at it a long time. Its top lip lifted, baring the gum, displaying stained teeth. It looked almost human, grimacing, like Roberta in the glass.

Gertrude called in sick the next morning. "You bet yo' life," Roberta said. She spent the entire day downstairs in her father's office, furiously tidying up, scrubbing the walls and floors, lathering the furniture, sweeping the cobwebs off the ceilings, dusting and polishing. It reminded her of a time in her childhood when her mother was still alive. That was a summer's night during the polio plague, before the development of the vaccine. Everywhere children were succumbing. Her own cousin was locked up in an iron lung, dangling between death and a life of paralysis. Gertrude awoke complaining of a stiff neck. Her father hurried to her bedside, and his worry and concern were so palpable that she escalated her cries and embellished her distress. He wrapped her neck in towels soaked in alcohol and wintergreen. He sat beside her, stroking her arm, cooing in her ear. It was such a comfort, the sweet reward of sickness, she could have made a career of it. By dawn, when he was ready to lift her up and carry her like a baby to the hospital, she admitted that the pain had disappeared. The next day, in expiation, she cleaned the entire house from top to bottom.

Even fewer patients than usual visited Dr. Stein that day. There was one woman whose eye had erupted with blood as she sat in the beauty parlor under a hair dryer. Another old customer had endured a night of aggravation, and so she came sim-

ily to have her blood pressure checked. It was high, nd she left elated. And there was a little black boy vho had been kicked in the groin by a playmate. His penis was bleeding. Gertrude listened as her fa- her pointed out the danger of infection. "It would e best to circumcise it," she heard him say. She vatched as he performed the surgery and then ressed the wound with what he called a "magical andage." It consisted of seven layers. The begin- ing of a suspenseful story, featuring supernatural reatures, was written and illustrated on the top ayer. Dr. Stein instructed the child to remove one ayer each day to uncover the next episode. By the eventh day he would learn what happens at the nd, "and your yo-yo will be good as new." After he boy and his mother left, Louis Stein turned to is daughter. "And what can I do for you, miss?" ie asked, parodying the most professional of de- neanors.

Gertrude sat down in the patient's chair. "There's io cure for me, Dr. Stein," she said.

"Oh, I have a bag full of tricks, Miss Stein, the ikes of which you've never seen."

"No, Dr. Stein, it's just too awful to talk about."

"Miss Stein, I assure you, whatever is said in this oom remains sealed in here forever. You're protect- ed by the sacred rules of confidentiality that govern he relations between the physician and his patient."

"I just can't talk about it, Dr. Stein. It's too hid- eous. I'm too ashamed. You've never heard a more errible tale."

"I've heard plenty in my time, Miss Stein. Why don't you try me?" So Gertrude told him the whole story. It had formed a crust over all her words and actions for nearly three months, yet it took less than a minute to relate. When she was through, she put ner head down on his desk, wept and wept and could not be consoled. Louis Stein raised his hand to pat her hair, but then withdrew it. "Miss Stein," he said, "pull yourself together. I'll need a few days to consider the options and to decide upon the best therapeutic course. In the meantime, remain calm and don't do anything foolish. Come back on this day." He scribbled a date and time on an appoint- ment card. Then he rose and shook her hand. Ger- trude left at once.



THREE DAYS later, promptly at the designated hour, Gertrude re- turned to his office. She was wear- ing her coat and carrying her pocketbook, and she entered from the outside instead of descending the stairs from the kitchen. "Ring bell and walk in," the little plaque said. She did so, and sat down in the empty waiting room leafing through copies of *Redbook* magazine, which were more than three years old. It was a long time before the doctor emerged. "Miss Stein?" he said, and stood aside to allow her to pass before him into the inner chambers. When they were seated across the desk from each other, Louis Stein began. "Miss Stein, I have been in this business a good many years. I have seen people born and I have seen them die. I've done my best to help them at each end. At least I have tried to do no harm. There were times, and I tell you this in confidence, that I've done things that were not strictly legal. I have pulled plugs and let them go in peace. I have killed mon- strous infants. I have performed abortions . . . I think this might be such a time." He paused. "Are you in agreement?" Gertrude closed her eyes. "Good." He handed her a folded white bedsheet. "Go into the next room and get undressed. Empty your bladder. Lie down on the table and place your heels in the stirrups. Drape this sheet over you. I'll be in in a few minutes."

He was wearing a surgical gown, a cap, and a mask when he entered the narrow examining room. He lowered the sheet and exposed the breasts, pal- pating them while looking away. Slightly swollen, perhaps, but not significantly so. Then he turned his eyes upon them. There was no vascular engorge- ment, secondary areola, or enlargement of the cir- cumlacteal sebaceous glands worth noting. He drew a rubber glove over his hand and sat down on the stool at the foot of the table. "Please bear with me, miss," he said. "Don't let those legs swing toget- her." He pushed aside the sheet that fell between her legs, like a diaper. He looked at the vagina. There was no cyanosis, but perhaps it was still too early. He inserted a finger into the vaginal canal, flexing the fundus at the same time. There was no real soft- ening of the cervix at the tip or at the uterine junc- tion. The uterus did not appear markedly enlarged. The signs, Ladin's, Hegar's, McDonald's, Von Fern- wald's, were not particularly evident. He took an instrument from his table. "This may hurt a little," he said. "Please try to cooperate." He struggled to dilate the cervix to No. 20 Hanks, but it was ex- tremely tight. Gertrude let out a scream. The sweat on Louis Stein's brow was running into his eyes. He inserted a curette, systematically exploring the en- tire uterine cavity. There were no irregularities—no tumors, septa, scarred regions, or recesses. There were no tissue fragments or blood clots. There were no polyps or myomas. There were no animals, vege- tables, or minerals. There was no earth, water, fire, or air. There was no Tom, Dick, or Harry. There was no word, written or spoken. There was no song or laughter. No Jack or Jill. No Baby Blue. "Get it out, get it out, get it out!" Gertrude moaned. He in- serted an open dry sponge to wipe out the walls of the uterine cavity, twisting it as he removed it. There was nothing there, a barren icescape and forgotten. "Oh, Mama, Mama," Gertrude cried, "when will it be over?"

"It's over, poor girl," said Louis Stein. "You can get up. The baby is out. It's all over." ■



SPEEDWAY

People don't just go to the Indianapolis 500 looking for gore. by Paul Fussell

THE VIOLENT death of driver Gordon Smiley at Indianapolis in May, only a week after the violent death of driver Gilles Villeneuve in Belgium, started a cascade of objections to motor racing, most of them based on the assumption that human beings are rational creatures, despite evidence to the contrary pouring in at the same time from the south Atlantic. In *Time*, Tom Callahan deplored the whole Indy enterprise: "Some 450,000 people," he wrote, "will perch or picnic at the Speedway on Sunday. Nobody knows how many of them are ghouls spreading their blankets beside a bad intersection." This reprehension of ghoulishness was attended by four gruesome color photographs intended specifically to gratify the ghoul in all of us. At the same time, Frank Deford was setting off his anti-Indy blast in *Sports Illustrated*, finding the race not a sport but a mere hustling of automotive products ("The drivers at Indy look much less like athletes than like a lot of congested billboards"). He concluded that among the spectators lurk a significant number of "barbarians." George Vecsey, in the sports pages of *The New York Times*, suggested that the Indy race is becoming too dangerous to be regarded as a sport. "I can see accidents," he said, "on the Long Island Expressway."

Were these people right? Is the Indy 500 a sporting event, or is it something else? And if something else, is it evil or benign?

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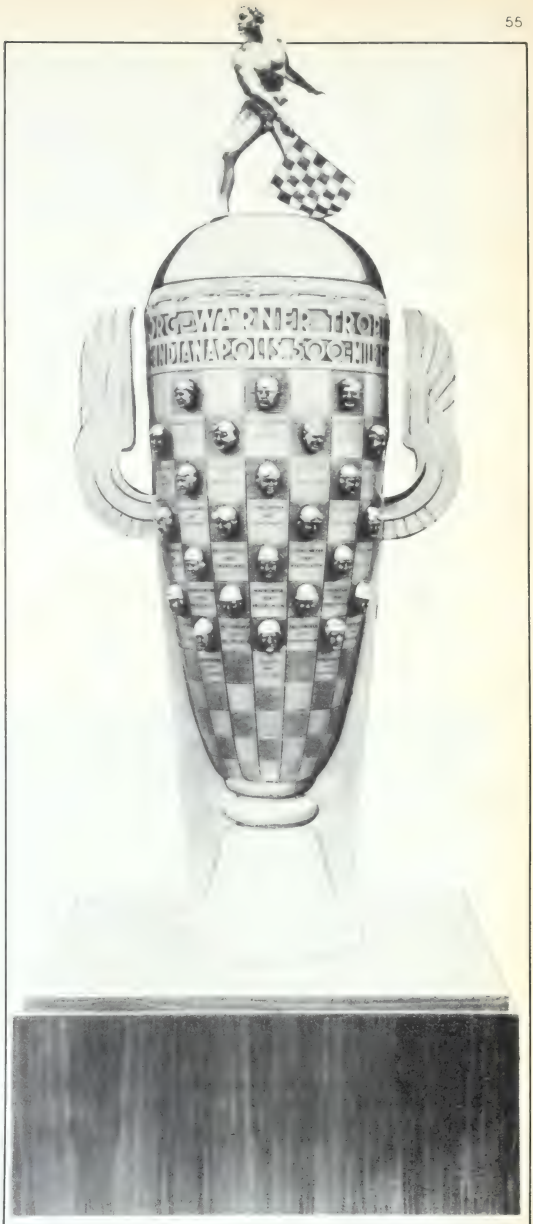
ALTHOUGH the automotive industry moved to Detroit early in this century, Indianapolis is still a motor city, swarming with car washes and auto-parts stores, and the sign on the road into town from the airport, WELCOME TO INDIANAPOLIS: CROSSROADS OF AMERICA, seems to imply that you're entering a place best reached by car. Here, nobody walks. One day I walked two and a half miles along Sixteenth Street to the Speedway, and in that one hour found myself literally the only person not in an automobile. Returning a few hours later, I was still the only walker, with the exception of a man who accosted me and tried to borrow sixty-two cents.

To a Northeasterner, Indianapolis seems at first to be a strangely retrograde repository of piety and patriotism. When I arrived, an editorial in the only paper in town was raising a populist voice in a call for school prayer, and a front-page box offered "Today's Prayer," just above "Today's Chuckle." After a short sojourn in Indianapolis one is no longer surprised at the imperious sign in the store window, GO TO CHURCH SUNDAY. Catholics wishing to arrive at the race very early Sunday morning, like everyone else, have their needs taken care of by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, which has ruled that they may fulfill their holy Sunday obligation "by attending Mass the evening before." Indianapolis seemed to me the sort of place where President Reagan expects no one to guffaw when he asserts that someone or something is "in my prayers." In fact, the president would love the place. Driving to the Speedway, the motorist passes a billboard advertising (of course) cars, but shouting also GOD BLESS

AMERICA. At the Speedway, even at qualifying trials weeks before the race, the national anthem is played at every opportunity, and the official program offers odd, vainglorious ads like one inserted by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers: "PRIDE—Pride helped build America into the greatest nation on earth."

"Naptown" is what many locals call Indianapolis, and it does seem a somnolent place. Although it's a city and not a town, it's hard not to think of the Hoosier Booth Tarkington and those long, warm, sleepy afternoons when Penrod and Sam found nothing whatever to do. As I experienced the slowness of the Indianapolis pace—every transaction seems to drag on interminably, every delay welcomed with friendly patience—I began to wonder whether speed and danger were not celebrated there one day a year just for the sheer relief and the novelty of it, just because on all other days life was so safe and predictable and slow. But friendly as well, it must be said. An elderly man flushing the urinal next to mine at the Speedway Motel, astonished at the noisy vigor of the flush, turned to me and, although we'd not been introduced, kindly made me the audience for his observation, "Gawd, the *suction* on that son of a bitch! If you dropped it *in* there, you'd really lose it!" Ron Dorson, an authority on the anthropology of Indy, observes that although "in most public social settings . . . it is considered socially deviant for strangers to approach one another," at the Speedway things are different. There, "it becomes perfectly acceptable to engage total strangers in conversation about lap times, automotive technology, Speedway management, or race-driver intrigue." There's something of pioneer individualism lingering in this friendliness, and on race Sunday, when you see the infield crowded with campers, tents, trailers, and "recreational vehicles," their occupants cooking and drawing water and cosseting children and making love in the friendliest fashion, you realize what the Indy setting really is: it's an early-nineteenth-century American pioneer campsite surrounded, as if fortuitously, by an early-twentieth-century two-and-a-half-mile track. And you almost begin to wonder if it's not the camping out, that primeval American ceremony of innocence, rather than the race and its hazards, that has drawn these crowds here.

I'D SAY the people can be divided into three social classes: the middles, who on race day tend, in homage to the checkered flag, to dress all in black and white and who sit in reserved seats; the high proles, who watch standing or lolling in the infield, especially at the turns, "where the action is"; and the uglies, the overadvertised, black-leathered, beer-sodden, pot-headed occupiers of that



The Borg-Warner trophy, awarded to the winner of the Indianapolis 500.

Indianapolis Motor Speedway

muddy stretch of ground in the infield at the first turn, known as the Snake Pit. These are the ones who, when girls pass, spiritlessly hold up signs reading SHOW US YOUR TITS. The uglies are sometimes taken to be the essence of Indy, and they are the people who, I think, Frank Deford has in mind when he speaks of "barbarians." But they are not the significant Indy audience. The middle class is, all those people arriving at the Speedway in cars bearing Purdue and Indiana State stickers.

The middles are privileged to participate in an exclusive social event, the classy pit promenade. Beginning three hours before the start, anyone who can wangle a pit pass strolls slowly up and down in the space between the pits and the track proper, all dressed up and watched enviously, he imagines, by some tens of thousands of his social inferiors in the stands. On race morning in Indianapolis this is the stylish place to be, a place where one wouldn't dare show oneself unshaven or in dirty clothes. Many spandy-clean black-and-white getups are to be seen there, including trousers with two-inch black-and-white squares. Even though the social tone is compromised a bit by the presence of representatives of the press (that's how I got there), the thing struck me as comparable with some of the great snob social operations of the world, like appearing in or near the royal box at Ascot or nodding to well-dressed friends while strolling slowly down the Champs Elysées. But this promenade was for middle-class people. The upper-middle class is not to be found at Indy. If you're the sort of person drawn to Forest Hills, or the Test Matches at Lord's, or the Americas Cup Races at Newport, you're not likely to be seen at the Speedway.

From the outset, devotees of auto racing have felt anxieties about its place on the class-status ladder. Is motor racing on a par with cockfighting and mud wrestling, or up there with football and perhaps even badminton? The surprise registered by an Indianapolis paper after the 1912 race speaks volumes, socially: "There has been no better-mannered gathering in Indianapolis. . . . There was no pushing, no crowding, no profanity, no discourtesies." When the Chief Steward issues the portentous injunction, "Gentlemen, start your engines," we may feel that the first word insists a bit too much. Presumably, if women drivers were to become a regular feature in the Indy, the formula would have to include "Ladies and . . ." Janet Guthrie, who has been on the premises, and has so far been the only woman to participate (three times), says: "I think that racing's image needs all the help it can get. It has traditionally been a lowbrow image." Before being killed in the Austrian Grand Prix in 1975, Mark Donohue, who had graduated not just from college but from Brown, raced at Indy and sensed what an anomaly he was there. "I was considered different from the other Indy drivers," he said. "I had gone to college, I was articulate, and I didn't swear a lot."



Barry Tonin © Sports Illustrated

The sense that racing will naturally sink prole-ward unless rigorously disciplined is what one takes away from a reading of the rule book promulgated by the United States Auto Club, the official supervisor of Indy racing. Cars are not to bear "undignified names," "improper language or conduct" is forbidden, and everything must be neat and clean at all times, just the way a gentleman would want it: "*Appearance*: cars, crews, and all pit personnel whose appearance detracts from the character of the program may be excluded."

A similar aspiration to respectability seems to be partially responsible for euphemisms that abound at Indy. Just as the self-conscious middle class may remark that someone has "passed away" (sometimes "over"), the Indy public-address announcer will inform the spectators that "We have a fatality." Instead of saying there's been a terrible smash-up on the third turn, he'll say, "We have a yellow light." A car never hits the wall, it "gets into" it, or even "kisses" it, and speakers aspiring to even greater tastefulness might observe that the driver has "visited Cement City." Driver Danny Ongais, badly injured in a crash in 1981, spoke of it this year not as the crash or even the accident but as "the incident." Everywhere there is the gentleman's feeling that if you pretend something has not happened, it has not. Thus the rule prohibiting cars to add oil during a race. Adding oil would publicly acknowledge, as racing journalist Terry Reed points out, "that a car is blowing (or leaking) its original supply on the track, making the course even more hazardous." Almost immediately after Gordon Smiley's body nauseatingly stained the wall, it was repainted, white and pure. Now his tire marks on the third turn run oddly into a clean expanse of white.

As Danny Ongais's indirection suggests, there are psychological as well as social reasons for all this euphemism. Racing is deadly dangerous, especially now that speeds around 200 miles an hour are the rule, which makes more true than ever Jackie Stewart's point: "Motor racing will always be dangerous because you are always going too fast for things around you." Johnny Rutherford adds: "Very few drivers—maybe only a handful—are capable of running 200 miles an hour." An example of one guy who wasn't, some say in Indianapolis, was the late Gordon Smiley. At least that's the way they rationalize in order to admit no defect in the conditions, only in the weaker aspirants, thus making racing seem a wholesome and natural illustration of Darwinian selection. A pervasive atmosphere of risk enshrouds a top driver's professional life. Jackie Stewart had occasion to realize, in June 1970, that in the past months he'd "seen more of life and death than most people see in two lifetimes. Four weeks after Jimmy died, it was Mike Spence at Indianapolis; four weeks later, another friend, Ludovico Scarfiotti; four weeks more, to the day, it was Jo Schlesser in Rouen; and two weeks ago, Bruce McLaren at Goodwood. Now it's Piers. It just keeps on." The USAC rule book says explicitly that "Automobile racing is a hazardous undertaking," and it implies it all the way through, as when it notes that all drivers are required to remove dentures before starting or when it lays down precise specifications for easily detached steering wheels, "to aid in removing injured drivers from cars."



I HAVE BEEN genuinely scared quite a bit, most notably in the infantry during the Second World War, when shells whined inexorably closer and closer to my body and I waited for them finally to make contact and tear me to pieces. But a further moment of sheer terror occurred at eleven in the morning of May 22, 1982, the third day of qualifying at Indy, when I entered the Speedway through an underpass running beneath the track itself and for the first time heard those cars screaming by just overhead. They give off not just an almost unbearable sudden noise, but shocking heat and concussion as well. In their appalling whoosh is the quintessential menace of the Machine. Not even an observer feels entirely safe at the Speedway, and indeed the spectators are in literal danger all the time—from hurtling machines, tires, and fragments, and from the deadly methanol fuel, which burns with a scarcely visible flame, consuming ears and fingers before onlookers are even aware that the victim's on fire. No wonder "13" is, by USAC edict, never used in car numbering.

No wonder, either, that the rituals of the Indy world are strenuously male, macho as all get-out. Women, even wives and mistresses, weren't allowed in the pits until 1970. In 1976 Janet Guthrie was hoping to enter the race. She couldn't get her car to go fast enough to qualify, but on her way to her car to try, as Dan Gerber, author of *Indy: The World's Fastest Carnival Ride*, remembers,

> *She is stopped by two slightly beer-crazed twenty-year-olds.*
>
> *"Hey, Janet," one of them calls. "You gonna qualify?"*
>
> *"I hope so," she replies, smiling, perhaps a little nervously.*
>
> *"Well, we don't," the other boy calls back to her. "We hope you crash and burn where we can see you."*

Actually, in order to understand precisely how male Indy is, you have only to scrutinize the famous Borg-Warner trophy, awarded annually to the winner. On top is a silver male figure ten inches tall, signaling the finish of a race by vigorously deploying a checkered flag, despite the curious fact that he's stark naked and exhibiting a complete set of realistic genital organs, instead of what we might



Heinz Kluetmeier © Sports Illustrated

expect, a *cache sexe* consisting maybe of a wind-blown bit of fabric. There he stands, quite undraped—unlike, say, the modest figure in front of Rockefeller Center—proclaiming for all to see the ideal maleness toward which Indy aspires.

The ideal whiteness, too. Indy, as Ron Dorson says, is "a show staged by white people for a white audience." Blacks are so rare among the spectators that you notice them specifically, and of course there are no black drivers, nor threat of any. (There was once a Jewish driver, Mauri Rose, but that's another story.) At a local cocktail party I broached the black topic as politely as I could and was told by one lady that blacks abjured the race because you had to sit for hours in the hot sun, and, as is well known, blacks can't bear to sit in the sun. Phoned for his views, the local NAACP spokesman fulminated, asserting that the situation is a scandal but that all black representations have been ineffective. Once Indy is over, and the Speedway emptied for another year, you see a lot of blacks there, working for a week to clear away the 6 million pounds of litter the crowd leaves (together with odd left-behinds like sets of teeth and, each time, two or three cars inexplicably abandoned forever in the infield).

The combined weight of the litter suggests the size of the crowd, estimated (since the Speedway does not issue a precise count) at around 400,000. And the size of the crowd suggests one other thing that's being celebrated. A name for it would be g gantism. It is the biggest of everything, "the large single-day sporting event in the world," as local pu licity says. And, as Roger Penske adds, for the dri ers it's "the biggest race in the world to win"; bo the purse and the publicity are the largest. There more press coverage—over 4,000 media people a there—than of any similar event. So gigantic is t track that a spectator can see only a tiny segme of it. Thus the public-address announcer is indi pensable, performing over (naturally) "the world largest public-address system" to tell you wh you're seeing. This means that every event is m diated through language: "We have a yellow light The Indy public-address and radio announcers ha always become public personages, even stars, an young Paul Page, who succeeded Sid Collins as t radio "Voice of the Indianapolis Five Hundred," as famous there as, say, George Steinbrenner in Ne York.

It's not just the announcing that makes Indy s curiously a language event. It's the advertising, th sight of grown men proud to be walking around i caps that say VALVOLINE or GOODYEAR. The car themselves, plastered with decals (CHAMPION, DIE HARD, STP), have been called, by somewhat heav wits, "the world's fastest billboards." Officially, Ind is a celebration of "progress" in the motor-car an rubber-tire industries, a testing ground for improve ments destined to make their way into your passen ger car. Unofficially, it's a celebration of the charm of brand names, of their totemic power to confe distinction on those who wear, utter, or displa them. You achieve vicarious power by wearing th right T-shirt or cap and thus allying yourself wit successful enterprises like BUDWEISER or GATORADE By the use of "legible clothing," as Alison Luri calls it, you fuse your private identity with externa commercial success, redeeming your insignificance and becoming, for the moment, somebody. Even the lucky wearers of the coveted pit passes are allowed to feel this sort of power, for the badges, not content to be merely what they are, are also little ads for CHEVROLET CAMARO. A person who couldn't read (a real "barbarian," maybe) would get very little out of Indy.

OBVIOUSLY there's much more going on here than is commonly imagined by the "Eastern press," and there's certainly more going on than an overpowering desire to see someone killed. There is a powerful and, in my view, benign element of ritual purgation about Indy, and the things purged are precisely such impurities as vulgarity, greed, snobbery, and sadism.

The events just preceding the race, presented always in the same order and with the same delib-

rate, ample timing, are enough to hint at this ritual element. It is a Sunday morning, a time once appropriated for rituals of purgation. When I asked why the race was run on Sunday despite protests from the local Baptists about profaning the Sabbath, and the inconvenience of closed liquor stores, was told that Monday, a holiday, was always available as a rain date. But the race seems to gravitate to Sunday for deeper reasons.

We've entered the Speedway very early, at 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning, although the crazies will have poured in, already blotto on beer and clad in T-shirts proclaiming the wearer TOO DRUNK TO FUCK, when the gates open at 5:00. We're all anticipating the hour of start, 11:00, the hour when, formerly, church services began. By 9:30 virtually everyone involved in the unvarying prestart ceremonies is in place. At 9:45, as—I'm quoting the official program—"the Purdue University Band plays 'On the Banks of the Wabash,' " the cars, still inert, silent, dead things, a threat to no one, are pushed by hand from the pits to their starting positions on the too narrow track, where they are formed up in eleven rows of a viciously hazardous but thoroughly traditional three-abreast arrangement. At 10:34 the Chief Steward makes a stately circuit in the pace car, inspecting the track for impurities one last time. At 10:44, all rise: "The Star-Spangled Banner." At 10:47, heads bowed for the invocation, delivered by a local divine, who prays for a safe race and reminds us of the dead of all our wars—and of all past Indys. One minute later "Taps." It is Memorial Day, one suddenly remembers. Two minutes after "Taps," the band plays, quite slowly, "Back Home Again in Indiana." By this time I am crying, for me always an empirical indication, experienced at scores of weddings and commencements, that I am taking part in a ritual. By the time the booming voice issued its command to the gentlemen, I was ready to be borne out on a litter, and the race hadn't even started yet.

If, while witnessing these things, you come to understand that Indy has something more to do with Memorial Day than coincidence, you also realize that there's some evanescent ritual meaning in the event's occurring at the moment recognized as the division between spring and summer. For Dan Gerber, listening as a boy annually to the Voice of the Indianapolis Five Hundred meant—release. "It meant school was getting out and I could get sunburned and go fishing and spend three months on Lake Michigan." For me, likewise, as an adult, as far away I used to listen stretched out in the sun on that weekend, it meant school was out: university was over for that year, I'd finally turned the grades in, no more pressure, no more anxiety about treating someone unfairly until we resumed in the fall. Indy, says the man who for years has commanded the corps of 600 ushers, "is spring tonic to me." I know what he means.



Barry Tenn © Sports Illustrated

As with a great many contemporary experiences, the meaning of Indy is elusive because it won't fit familiar schemes of classification. The rationalist, trying to make sense of its competitive elements, concludes that news about it belongs on the sports page. But then Warner Wolf, the TV sports commentator, appalled by the destruction of Villeneuve and Smiley, argues that racing's not a sport at all and indignantly defames it as merely a thing about machines. Although there probably is a legitimate sport called "motor sport," indulged in largely by amateurs, Wolf is right in perceiving that what takes place at Indy is not a sport. The true nature of Indy is in its resemblance to other rituals in which wild, menacing, nonhuman things are tamed.

I'm thinking of the rodeo and the bullfight. Subduing beasts that, unsubdued, would threaten man—that's the ritual of rodeo, and, with some additional deepening of the irrational element, of the bullfight as well. Just like at Indy, you can get hurt trying to subdue wild horses, killed trying to dominate bulls. Virility, *cojones* figure in each of these, as the little silver man indicates they do at Indy. Warner Wolf is also right when he notes that Indy is a thing about machines, but it's about machines only the way rodeos would be about broncos if no men were there to break them and bullfights about *toros* if no *toreros* were there to command them. Indy enacts the ritual taming and dominating of machines, emphasizing the crucial distinction be-



tween man and machine, the one soft and vulnerable but quick with courage and resource, the other hard and threatening but cold and stupid. The cars are at Indy so that men can be shown to be capable of dominating them, and the wonder and glory of the dominators is the point. Indy is thus a great Sunday-morning proclamation of the dignity of man, and no number of discarded chicken bones or trampled beer cans can change that. Like former Sunday-morning rituals, Indy insists that people are worth being saved.

Do some people, regardless, come to see drivers killed? Probably, but as irrelevant a tiny number of the sick as those who enjoy seeing a bullfight ruined by the bullfighter's being gored. If you see someone die at Indy, you are seeing that the machine has won, and that's opposed to everything the ritual is saying. A longtime student of the race, Sam Posey, seems to get the point when he addresses the pleasure spectators take in identifying themselves with the driver-tamer of the machine. When things go wrong and the crowd sees a driver killed, he says, "They are terribly shocked and extremely depressed. They wish they had not been there." What the spectator wants to see—needs to see?—is the machine crashing, disintegrating, wheels flying off, and in the end the man springing out and waving "I'm okay." "Because that's the moment of the greatest thrill," says Posey. "That's when man has conquered the machine. The machine has bitten back, but the man jumps out laughing and therefore the spectator's dream of immortality is confirmed." Immortality: hence, value, and value much longer lasting than the value conferred on congeries of steel, aluminum, and rubber by the mere age of the machine.

It was at Indy during a week when every day brought worse news of young people's limbs blown off in the south Atlantic, and perhaps the contrast between that spectacle and the Greatest Spectacle in Racing made Indy seem especially therapeutic. No one was hurt all the time I was there, the only injuries being sunburns and hangovers. I went there looking for something mean, but all I found was something innocent. The spectators were the innocents persuaded that the space shuttle promises great things, the same innocents who lost much of their money by putting it into United States Savings Bonds.

If Indy is in one sense about beer, in a deeper sense it's about milk. A full-page ad in the official program, inserted by "Your Local Indiana Dairy Farmer," announced that milk is "the Drink of Champions" and noted that "over the past six years milk has powered the 'Fastest Rookie.'" Indy, the program also said, is "An American Tradition." I'm glad it is. ■

DESIGNS FOR LIVING

by Posy Simmonds





Otis Ferguson

Where Critics Go Wrong

by James Wolcott

The careers of Kenneth Tynan and Otis Ferguson.

IN 1935, the editor and critic Otis Ferguson lived above a movie theater in Manhattan's Union Square—"a firetrap that specialized in Soviet films," remembers Alfred Kazin in his memoir *Starting Out in the Thirties*. Visiting Ferguson to cart him off to a dinner date in the dark wilds of Brownsville, Kazin found his boss at the *New Republic* nursing a pint of Four Roses while he worked, "honestly loading himself up, like a jazz player, to improve his performance." Coming up through the floorboards were the rumbling sounds of the Russian movie unreeling below. "Ferguson, a bantamweight cockily beating time with his heels, was finishing up a piece, humming away at his desk, while the voices of stern and virtuous Soviet military commanders in *Chapayev* boomed up through the floor. 'Go it, man!' Ferguson shouted, and grabbing his bottle waltzed it around the room." That's the Otis Ferguson of legend—a life of jazz, movies, booze, and laughs, scored to a lilting twirl.

As Kazin observes, Ferguson himself was legend-conscious, using the ragged edges in his manner to give the stuffed shirts around the office a razzing fright. Born in 1907, Ferguson enlisted in the navy at the age of seventeen, notching up four years as a gob at a time when many his age were idling along with summery ease. But it was more than toil that set Ferguson apart from the softies at the *New Republic*. Kazin: "Ferguson was one of the real roughs of the Thirties—not because he had been a sailor, but because he feared and despised high culture."

With rebel disdain, Ferguson swerved from the armchair comforts of Literature and submerged himself in the headier intoxications of movies and jazz, writing about both with a busy, muscular zeal. When World War II broke out, Ferguson signed on as a Merchant Marine and saw duty on a convoy mission to North Russia; in 1943 he shipped out again, and died during a bombing raid in the Bay of Salerno. Ferguson, the only one to perish in the raid, was thirty-six years old, a frisky age for most critics. At thirty-six, he was still a scrapping cub.

Since Ferguson's death, friendly critics have tried to tout him as a forgotten American original—an untutored genius who hacked through tangled riches of pop culture in the Thirties, clearing a path for more famous adventurers like James Agee and Robert Warshow. In 1971, Ferguson's movie reviews were excavated from the back numbers of the *New Republic* and gathered for the first time in book form by Robert Wilson for Temple University Press, with the film critic Andrew Sarris contributing a foreword. Why did Ferguson's movie criticism take three decades to land between covers? Sarris suggests that it was the lionization of James Agee that elbowed Ferguson into the wings, a lionization rooted in effete snobbishness. "Agee was blessed with the kind of bookish credentials that enabled the trolls and Trillings of the literary establishment to hail him as the one and only compleat film critick." Sarris's fanciful spelling indicates that he feels there's something dandified and suspect about Agee, while Ferguson is the real rugged goods, an outsider with cigarette smoke in his lungs and the

city's pulse in his pacing stride.

Now, to bring Otis Ferguson out of the lonesome chill, December Press has assembled *The Otis Ferguson Reader*, which mounts on display not only a sample of Ferguson's movie criticism but previously uncollected reminiscences, book reviews, radio and theater pieces, and —of highest significance to Ferguson's followers—a generous heaping of his writings on jazz. The book is edited by Dorothy Chamberlain and Robert Wilson, and, fittingly, its foreword is by Ferguson's former boss at the *New Republic*, Malcolm Cowley. *Is* Otis Ferguson an unsung treasure, a disturber of the peace shunned by bloodless aesthetes? After burrowing through these two volumes, I have my doubts, not only about Otis Ferguson's place in criticism but about the wisdom of critics buttoning up their trenchcoats to shield themselves against the caressing drizzle of high culture. Giving art-with-a-capital-A the raspberry can itself turn into a mode of aestheticism—a dandyism of loud ties and hepcat threads.

IN SMALL pinches, the humor and sarcasm of Otis Ferguson's movie criticism carries a lot of comic pepper. At a time when the filmmaker Frank Capra is being fawned over as if he had shaken off frostbite at Valley Forge, it's a welcome treat to flip to Ferguson's review of Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and see him lay on the lumber. "*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* is the story of how a leader of Boy Rangers was sent to the Senate by the state political machine because he was popular, honest, and dumb. Washington is a shrine to him. So as he gawps around lost for a whole day, throw in thousands of feet of what can only be called a montagasm [an orgasm of montage], buildings, monuments, statues, immortal catchphrases in stone." ("Gawps" is the perfect word to catch the flavor of Jimmy Stewart's noodleheaded awe.) *The Otis Ferguson Reader* is also spiced with tossed-off sallies, many of them aimed at other writers. "Clifford Odets' success came in the early thirties, when all you had to do was open with 'Workers of the world . . .' and close with 'ARISE!' and you had powerful, nay biting dramah." Reviewing a collection of James T. Farrell stories, Ferguson reveals that even he has a line of impatience when it comes to tough-cookie bluster, as he gives Farrell a deflating what-for. "Except for a few pieces about intellectuals (satire like elephants out for a good romp), the stories are about punks and low Irish and floozies and have a general pattern if not a plot: 1) an initial scene of squalor and pus; 2) some violent deeds and words interspersed with Writing; 3) the 'planting' of cause and result in the social system so that you can't miss it; 4) a sudden frenzy of blood and bowels, followed by an anticlimax of perfunctory exposition or an ironic last word."

Even Edmund Wilson comes in for a few irritable nips. Taking on *The Boys in the Back Room*, Wilson's study of Hemingway-influenced writers like James M. Cain, John O'Hara, and John Steinbeck, Ferguson notes that whenever Wilson tries to use up-to-date slang, he gums up his sentences. Not a trivial miscue, argues Ferguson. "This twenty-three-skiddoo business would be nothing if it didn't go deeper. The men he is putting in place talk in the idiom, most of them. And it is in that idiom they have something to say. It is as though Mr. Wilson were reading them in translation in the first place; and then he goes farther by dragging them into his thesis—not into his net so much as into his nettle, which is Hollywood." Wilson, suggests Ferguson, is one of those reviewers who gases on about the pleasures of reading but in fact "has long ceased to read with anything but pencil, pad, and purpose."

EDMUND WILSON was often blinkered by his commonsensical huffiness (he never *could* see what was so funny about P. G. Wodehouse), and his eagerness to fix writers in place occasionally led him to drive spikes into their delicate efforts instead of making do with a few dapper pins. But perhaps the reason Edmund Wilson was and is a major force has something to do with the fact that in criticism "purpose" outlasts casual flourishes and tootles of improvisation. Ferguson's best reviews, as Kazin notes, were considered to be virtuoso bursts of improvisation, with words fired to the wind like so many hot notes. One is reminded of that (awful) scene in the recent movie *Heart Beat* in which the actor portraying Jack Kerouac lugs a typewriter into a bathroom where a wino is indecorously puking and declares, "I'm gonna play this thing like Charlie Parker."

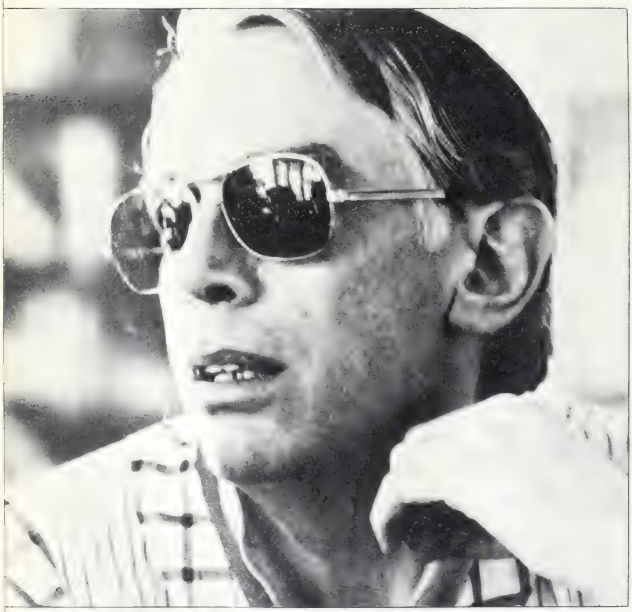
Ferguson may have wanted to play his thing like Bix Beiderbecke, but the impulse was the same—to catch ineffable moods on the fly, in a spray of color and rude eloquence. As every writer knows, however, language and inspiration can be cruel little teases. Words that burn on the retina with genius and glory in the witching hours can by cool morning seem like so many mounds of uninspired twaddle. Reading Otis Ferguson, one is struck not so much by the rogue shafts of true insight as by the surrounding noise, the buzz and tweet of all that wordiness. Too often Ferguson didn't give his sentences time to cool.

Consequently, wordiness takes its greatest toll in the jazz pieces, where Ferguson gave loose rein to his enthusiasms. If rock music is essentially precoital (a cranking-up, an incitement) and country music is essentially postcoital (an afterwash of regrets and might-have-beens), then jazz is the thing itself, the place where the sheets get mussed, the nightstands overturned. Although Ferguson's love of Beiderbecke, Benny Goodman, and Louis Armstrong comes shining through ("Good jazz is good improvisation, but this does not mean relying purely on hooch and frenzy," he writes in an admiring note on Beiderbecke), his prose doesn't have much of a sensuous pump, and he spends too much space slapping the wrists of those starched snobs and trendies

who really don't understand the swinging exuberance of jazz. For me, the best pieces are those in which Ferguson writes not about the music but about the lives of jazz musicians—the road fatigue, the squabbles, the sudden surges of excitement on stage.

For instance: "Night after night after night, making the bus, the train, the barber's, the tailor's, the hotel, the stand, jump, jump, jump, and then the grind of the show itself, the same old numbers until even the good ones are more automatic than fun and the bad ones a matter of foul language." Ferguson so sympathizes with those on the grind that he shares their resentment toward a fellow critic, John Hammond, also known (and not affectionately) as the Dean of the Swing Critics. "[When] John's got a new favorite, the N.F. can be off the beat and off the chord half the night and you'll still see that crew haircut bobbing along and it's still aces, every inch." The capper: ". . . the phrase 'Uh-oh, the Bringdown's here' is as familiar in some quarters as 'Soup's on,' with different effect."

Otis Ferguson on jazz is hardly a bringdown, but even when writing about the lives of those he admires he doesn't know how to clip his sentences to a tidy trim. In a piece on Red Norvo, one paragraph begins, "Well anyway, Mildred married Red Norvo (whose name is Kenneth Norville, if you can whip up any interest) around six years ago, and they're together since like a hand and a glove"—a sentence in which Ferguson isn't so much improvising as simply tacking on phrases, like a carpenter with a few extra nails in his mouth. If James Agee is still cherished by many and Otis Ferguson cherished only by the faithful few, it isn't because Agee had "bookish credentials" that Ferguson lacked but that Agee, extravagant as he could be, had a friskier intelligence and a firmer command of the particulars of writing. His stuff was built to withstand stiff breezes. A writer of racy appetites, Otis Ferguson succumbed, I think, to one of the perils critics are heir to: he became too smitten with his appetites, too smitten with the sound of his own voice—he imprisoned himself in a cocoon of bluff and chatter. "CRITICS OUGHT TO LEARN HOW TO TAKE THEIR TIME" was Ferguson's booming advice to John Hammond, and the sad thing about Ferguson's career was that he didn't live long enough to learn how to take his own time. "Let them eat static," says Ricardo Montalban's Khan in the recent *Star Trek* movie, and although December Press deserves credit for bringing out *The Otis Ferguson Reader* as a labor of love, many readers chancing upon these pages are going to feel that they, too, are eating static.



Kenneth Tynan

WHILE Otis Ferguson played the role of the raffish loner, the late Kenneth Tynan too often wanted to be the rosiest man at the dais, raising a glass of bubbly in fond salute. In his impetuous youth, Tynan was a drama critic so deft and suave that he seemed to pluck brilliant phrases out of his cuffs like silk scarves, one after another. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, recently reissued in paperback by Da Capo Press ($7.95), marks the turning point in Tynan's career, the moment in which Tynan threw down the foils of criticism to become a chumming swell—"a friend of the famous," to quote the jacket copy.

Tynan's own preface sets the book's convivial tone. "In 1963," he writes, "I gave up regular reviewing, and since then I have been free to focus on what fascinated me, as opposed to what happened to be set before me. The result is this harvest of preferences and predilections, an armful of bouquets tossed at some of the talents by which I have been awed and exhilarated. . . ." Sounds like a task for spring maidens, tossing bouquets hither and yon, but it must be said that two of Tynan's tributes here are first-rate: a memoir-appreciation of Noel Coward and a study of the comic manner of Eric Morecambe, one half of the English comedy team of Morecambe

and Wise. ("The Morecambe and Wise Show" is syndicated nationally in the U.S.) But the other pieces reveal what happens when a critic decides to play toastmaster.

Writing about illustrious women, for example, Tynan turns into something of a delirium-queen. After celebrating the "Sistine purity" of Ethel Merman's vocalizing (Ethel Merman!), he writes, "The big room rocks to her; we rise to her indomitable simplicity, and wonder, as our palms steam with applause, what there ever was about Callas that we deemed worthier of our tears." As if that were not enough, Tynan then compares Ethel Merman to Seneca's Medea, capable of surviving the fall of Gibraltar. On Marlene Dietrich, Tynan is even more agog, saying that "She shows herself to the audience like the Host to the congregation" and arguing that she would make a formidable Mother Courage: "I can picture her pulling a wagon across the battlefields, chanting those dark and stoical Brechtian songs. . . ." (Gee, I can't.)

Of Ferguson and Tynan, Tynan's is the sadder case because he did establish himself as a critic of wit and force, then allowed himself to trail off into the wispy clouds of all this darling dither. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping* is an important work in the Tynan canon because it serves as the bridge from *Curtains* (one of the great books of English drama criticism) to the later Tynan of *Show People* (a collection of amiable, doting—and slight—celebrity profiles). It also shows Tynan fluffing the feather of his hedonism as he moves into his *Oh! Calcutta* phase, coming on as the prince of randy pleasure. Kenneth Tynan, too, fell in love with his own voice, but it was not a voice slangy and caustic (like Ferguson's) but one intent upon birdlike enchantments. Once Kenneth Tynan learned to coo, he became a small, happy voice on the scene, quite a comedown for a critic many thought destined to rule in the footsteps of George Bernard Shaw. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping* shows where Kenneth Tynan went so distressingly wrong. ■



Bloom, Bloom, Go Out the Room!

by Marvin Mudrick

The final daze of academic criticism.

HAROLD BLOOM's terminal case of transumption has been brought on by too much "strong reading," a morose exercise for which according to his statement Emerson and Freud bear part of the blame, and which Bloom doesn't scruple to characterize as "not less aggressive than sexual desire."* *Reading.* Wow. Tell it to your local librarian. (Academic criticism is dead, of which Professor Bloom is the latest assassin and heir: *The Breaking of the Vessels* is his latest and most desperate book, a scant hundred pages, as thin as an instruction manual for a stationary bicycle but far more aggressive, the glummest and grimmest funerary Bloom yet to get laid —if you'll pardon the expression— on the tomb of academic criticism.)

Meanwhile, as a slow (though strong) reader confronted by a crux, I'm not sure whether Bloom is presenting us here with an agonistic image (reading and writhing?) or a Scene of Instruction or a pragmatic self-engendering or a valorization of ephebes or an analogue to poetic closure or an ellipsis of further figuration or a rebound of intertextual echo or a revisionary ratio or another of his bitter sprigs of Freudian catnip ("The innocence or primal virtue of reading"—he means "The *idea* of the innocence, etc."—"is a last social mystification, akin to the"—he means "the *idea* of the"—"sexual innocence of childhood, or of womankind") or else Bloom, Bloom, groping for a trope ("We know at least some of the precursor texts that are transumed by the authors of Genesis, and we can surmise what the Priestly Author in particular troped against in his audacious account of Creation"; but Bloom is more troped against than troping), as he in short just flaunting his familiar functional illiteracy perpend. This may be your

* *The Breaking of the Vessels*, by Harold Bloom. University of Chicago, $10.

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Jeanne Bloom

only chance to unravel what Bloom means by "the spiritual cost of criticism." Which, therefore, is it which isn't less aggressive than which? How can doing one thing be like desiring another? Is it the leaning back of somebody daydreaming about strong reading which isn't less aggressive than sexual desire? Or is it the *enactment* (to raid the Bloomian thesaurus) of strong reading which isn't less aggressive than sexual desire? Or than the *enactment* of sexual desire? Because if it's No. 3, if making out the words on the page discombobulates the glands as bodaciously as making out, then after the first fine careless rapture a steady regimen of strong reading might be expected to deconstruct even a billy-goat.

At any rate—goats and monkeys! —strong reading is nothing to sniff at, and here goes nothing. "We say," says Bloom speaking for all of us, "that to be alone with a book is to confront neither ourselves nor another. We lie. [Hey, buster, I never opened my mouth.] When you read, you confront either yourself, or another [or both, or neither; and note the sly change of pronoun that at negligible spiritual cost spirits him off from his place among the other liars in the dock], and in either confrontation you seek power [hence the change of pronoun may hint that though Bloom's hapless readers are on the lookout for a few kilowatts of illumination they won't turn up any because the master has already cornered the market]." "Transumption is used to introject a sense of earliness, and to project the otherwise crippling sense of belatedness." I get it: early is good, late is bad (but the belated poet as agonist transumes his negation into "the power of a p-poetry p-p-perpetually battling its own b-belatedness"). "Emerson praised Milton for the adage that the poet 'ought himself to be a true poem,' and then transcended Milton by urging the reader to become an even truer poem than the poet. . . . How can the critic as strong reader so revise, correct, and reverse *Paradise Lost*, as to become a poem truer than that magnificence?" How but by rhyming with Bloom? I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree; but lovelier still than which is whom, viz. Yale Professor Harold Bloom. (Or, if you don't have any more consideration for poems than Bloom does, "who.") "Bloom, Bloom, go out the room!" (advised Leo Rosten's H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*-L*A*N many years ago, prophetically). "What lifts poetry above mere verse?" queries Bloom. What lifts Professor Harold Bloom above the moldy figgish gloom?

> *I have discovered that what many moldy fig academics and most literary journalists authentically share is a capacity for boundless indignation when I advocate a contemporary version of the Emersonian program. . . . When Emerson says that a transcendental criticism can suppose the entire disappearance of poetry, he out-Hegels Hegel, and I would think by design. Emerson now seems to me the strongest reader of the nineteenth century, which far more than our time was the age of strong readers. He knew what I sometimes despair of showing our contemporaries, which is that reading strong poems costs us a great deal, or, as he said, nothing is got for nothing. The knee jerk of the weak critic is the insistence that poetry and criticism need cost nothing, that sweetness and light respond to sweetness and light. . . . I reject all Gallic modes of recent interpretation because they dehumanize poetry and criticism, and it ought to be clear by now that I don't exactly espouse a sentimental humanism* [no marriage in heaven, no love in Bloom]. . . . *Poetry, like criticism, is conflict and crisis, is projected jealousy and the death drive, is the horror and the allure of incest* [he don't care what Momma don't allow, gonna fuck his sister anyhow]. . . . *I would say the one virtue of my own work . . .*

—but *basta!* The man's a legend in his time, and now we have his manifesto and testament. "There are no texts [except a text entitled *The Breaking of the Vessels*: what broke the vessels was wind; what broke wind was the University of Chicago Press, which has issued this shattering report at ten bucks a crack], so that it makes little difference to affirm that there is nothing outside the text [Bloom's *coup de grâce* for Jacques Derrida's inexcusably Gallic *mot*: "*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*"]. Rather, there are configurations, richly perverse interlockings of a multiplicity of strong texts and a few scattered handfuls of strong [and tiny] readers. Poetry happens *within* those configurations, within those ratios of revision that adjust the intricate balances of psychic warfare between and within texts and readers." "The poet *qua* poet is my obsessive concern [or the critic *qua-qua-qua-qua* poem]."

Bloom's theory has the horror and the allure of a Big Mac, his diction is interoffice memo, his critical practice when he comes right down to it is routine late-afternoon Eng-Lit classroom bullying: Isn't this grand? Isn't this exciting? Miss Blintz, are you asleep again? plus certain labels guaranteed by *Good Housekeeping*, e.g., "original" and "uncanny" (everything on his approved list is "uncanny," beginning with "the uncanniness of the strong reading experience" and levitating to "So great is the uncanniness of this . . .")—"J's poetic tales [the Abraham and Jacob stories, attributed by biblical scholars to "that anonymous great writer, fully the equal of Homer, whom scholars have agreed to call by the rather Kafkan name of the letter J, or the Yahwist"] . . . are now so much the staple of Judaism and Christianity, and have been such for so long, that we simply cannot read them. Yet they were and are so original that there is quite another sense in which they have never been read, and perhaps cannot be read. If we allowed them their strangeness [or uncanniness], then their uncanniness [or originality] would reveal that tradition never has been able to assimilate their originality [or strangeness]." Thereupon Bloom synopsizes the story of God's visit to Abraham, and, praying silently for the three-fifty bell

and escape till Monday from that sea of drowning faces, labors without sweetness or light at the task of verifying how uncanny and original it all is:

> *What can we do with a Yahweh who sits on the ground, devours calf, is offended by an old woman's sensible derision, and then walks on to Sodom after being argued down by Abraham to a promise that he will spare that wicked city if he finds just ten righteous among the inhabitants? The silliest thing we can do is to say that J has an anthropomorphic concept of god* [Bloom's or the copy editor's lowercase *g*]. . . .

So much for the raised hand of Miss Blintz (temporarily awake) and her timid, obvious comment—"It's anthropomorphic, isn't it?"—which is an accurate gloss on the story in spite of Bloom's spastic arm-wavings intended to distract us from the facts: that J's kind of story is neither uncanny nor original (nor even as great as Homer); that it shows up in all cultures; and that because of its ubiquity it is responsible for the invention of Miss Blintz's useful word.

What a grouch! Not content with the rank and perquisites of University Professor of the Humanities at Yale, not content with having founded a sect that wears beige robes and solicits contributions at airports, not content with the lunatic accolade in the book's foreword by somebody Bloom condescends to in an aside some pages later as "the lively Lentricchia" (who crosses his fingers and says that "the entire text is written in a cunningly epigrammatic style that is commanding in every sense—clear, forceful, polemical, and unusually witty": *Bloom?*), Bloom refuses to accept anything less than unanimous and unconditional surrender: "After half a lifetime of giving offense, to weak critics, academic impostors, inchoate rhapsodes, and virtuous journalists . . .": Why doesn't *everybody* understand that my need to be heard is the proof that I have something to say? Why doesn't *everybody* take my medals seriously? He's the Woody Allen of critics; true, Allen is much smarter and more talented, often funnier, but each is brash and broody, clumsy and uncomely, touchy, vain, pretentious, not less aggressive than sexual desire, ethnic at a time when ethnic is in ("The interpreter here is a Jewish Gnostic"), savoring his influence but scratching the itch of his anxiety, self-promoting, exhibiting himself undraped to the public he's always ready to reproach for not immediately acknowledging him as Hercules or Apollo (I'd better add that I've never seen Bloom or a picture of him, and I don't even know whether he exists). Moreover, not content with transuming every poem in the language to a limp noodle in the soup of literary affinities, he's having a go at fiction too (Lentricchia: "for those who doubt that Bloom's views have relevance for prose fiction, here is the definitive answer"), crunching in like Son of Kong from the general direction of "Ash Wednesday":

> *The language of kinship and crisis was discarded by Eliot because it placed the principal emphasis upon personality, and upon the fantasias and defenses of a poet's personality. I do not think that sexual distaste or anxiety was at the root of Eliot's aversion to his own experience of poetic origins. Rather, he dissimulated* [or mystified] *as all good poets seem to need to mystify* [or dissimulate] *in this area. Perhaps that is why* Ash Wednesday, *his crucial crisis* [or critical crucifix] *ode, follows so uncannily the sequence of ratios and crossings that I have traced in many major lyrics of the Post-Enlightenment.*
>
> *But it would be a facile exercise to demonstrate this pattern in* Ash Wednesday. ["It would be easy to do," as President Nixon used to say, "but it would be wrong."] *Instead I want to demonstrate something of the pragmatic value of my ratios and crossings by applying them, freestyle, to my favorite work of modern American prose fiction, Nathanael West's* Miss Lonelyhearts . . .

—which is a bore and stranded in its time, but no novel (or poem) of any

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time deserves to be carried to the top of the Empire State Building and pelted with voodoo dolls: "another displaced version of the Miltonic/Romantic crisis-poem, each scene tends to manifest at least some of the ratios I have sketched so often"; "a wild speeding-up or dance of death, comparable to Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* or Blake's *The Mental Traveller*"; "The precursor work is certainly Milton's [not Shakespeare's] *Paradise Regained*"; "one of *Job*'s descendants as are also Wordsworth's *The Borderers* and Blake's *Milton* [not Milton's *Blake*]" "*Paradise Regained* is uncannily close to *Miss Lonelyhearts*, which I would insist is the superior work"; "the novel's eighth *tableau* . . . begins with a grand *clinamen*, a swerve away from pastoral, here not a Blakean innocence but D. H. Lawrence's vitalism"; "Shrike's . . . antithetical completion not of Lawrence but of the Melville of *Typee* and its companion works"; "satirizes Firbank and the early Aldous Huxley"; "parody of Fitzgerald and Hemingway"; "parody of Aestheticism, the victims being the line of Pater, Wilde, and Yeats" (Lentricchia: "an unprecedented reading of . . . *Miss Lonelyhearts*," or, for that matter, of anything else). Bloom is ambitious. Not content with "supposing," like Emerson, "the entire disappearance of poetry," not content with doing his bit toward the decimation of any likely audience for it, he aches to bring down fiction too; and here too his precursor is Emerson, who having read the two greatest novels in English made a memorable entry in his journal:

> *I am at a loss to understand why people hold Miss Austen's novels at so high a rate, which seem to me vulgar in tone, sterile in artistic invention, imprisoned in the wretched conventions of English society, without genius, wit, or knowledge of the world. Never was life so pinched and narrow. The one problem in the mind of the writer in both the stories I have read,* Persuasion, *and* Pride and Prejudice, *is marriageableness. All that interests in any character introduced is still this one. Has he or she money to marry with, and conditions conforming? 'Tis "the nympholepsy of a fond despair," say, rather, of an English boarding-house. Suicide is more respectable.*

Novelists are more interested in overshoes than in the Oversoul, which takes its manly revenge on this vulgar and sterile English spinster with the help of a quote from Byron's *Childe Harold* (the precursor to Bloom's Child Harold),which, as Emerson would have read in *Persuasion* if he got through it, offers so thrilling a dose of horror and allure to the Bloomian Captain Benwick that Jane Austen's shy but compassionate heroine feels obliged to give him some advice:

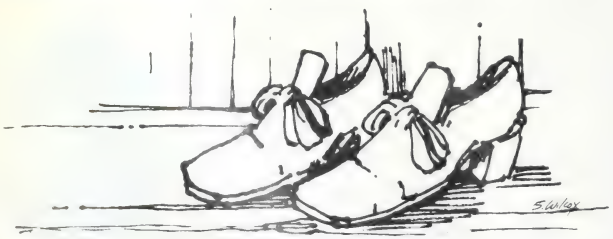
> *he repeated, with such tremulous feeling, the various lines which imaged a broken heart, or a mind destroyed by wretchedness, and looked so entirely as if he meant to be understood, that she ventured to hope he did not always read only poetry; and to say, that she thought it was the misfortune of poetry, to be seldom safely enjoyed by those who enjoyed it completely; and that the strong feelings which alone could estimate it truly, were the very feelings which ought to taste it but sparingly.*
>
> *His looks showing him not pained, but pleased with this allusion to his situation, she was emboldened to go on; and feeling in herself the right of seniority of mind, she ventured to recommend a large amount of prose in his daily study.*

With all due respect I would like to make the same recommendation to Professor Bloom and, if he weren't probably dead, Emerson (who couldn't have read but would have equally condemned Jane Austen's private comment, in a letter to her sister, on the most recent publication by the oversoulful Byron: "I have read the Corsair, mended my petticoat, & have nothing else to do").

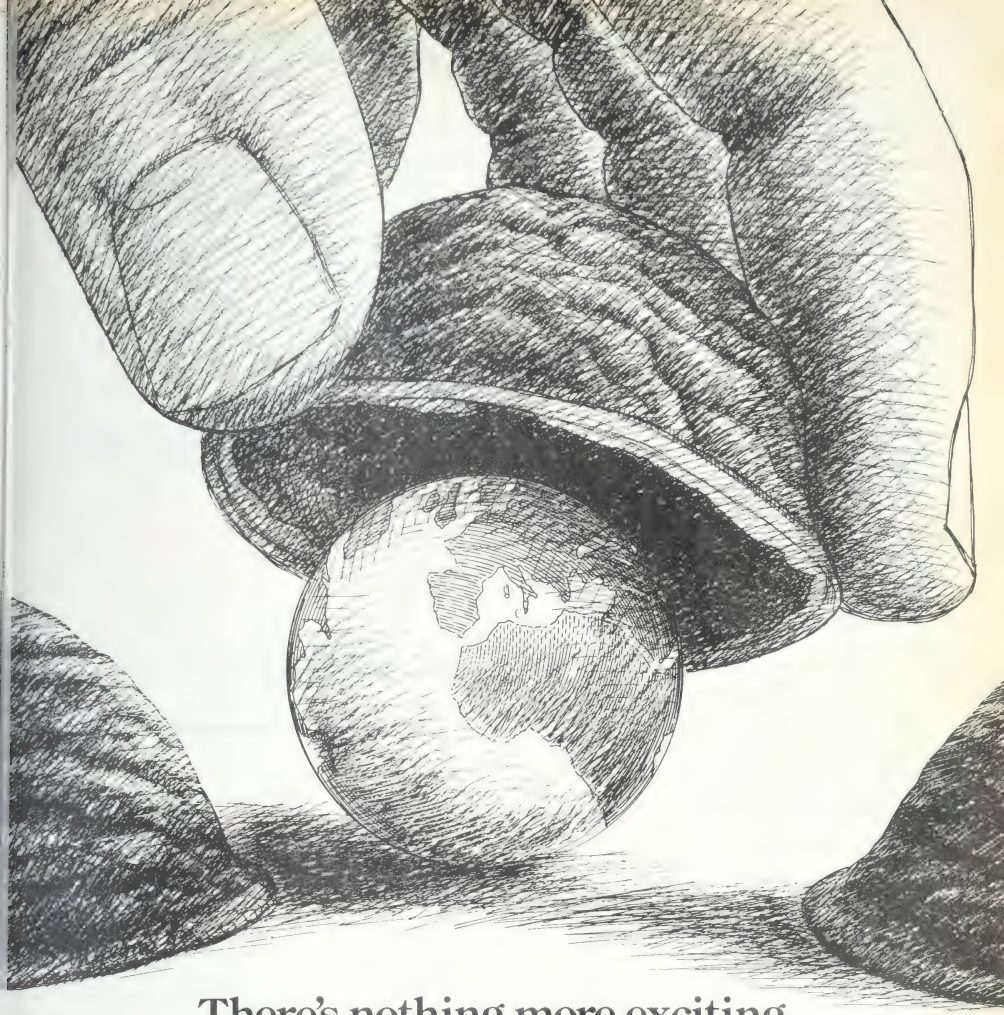
Bloom, however, sinks back as soon as possible into his primordial soup of poetry, "in the context of transumption, where the influence process uncannily flows backwards," and ends by examining, though in uncanny chronological order, "a particular transumptive series in Milton to Coleridge to Emerson to Stevens [which] involves the trope of blankness, at once whiteness or colorlessness, yet oddly also blackness. . . . The route from Milton's blindness through Coleridge's dejection and Emerson's strength on to Stevens' auroral despair culminates in Stevens' rugged acceptance on an ordinary evening in that most ordinary of cities, New Haven. . . ." But before onwards, upwards:

> *But before tracing the movement from Milton onwards, a reverie upon the trope of the blank is necessary.*
>
> *The blank, being both unwrit-*

Negligible Literary Anecdotes No. 5



When Joseph Addison was an undergraduate at Oxford, he liked to take long walks. After he settled in London, he did less walking.



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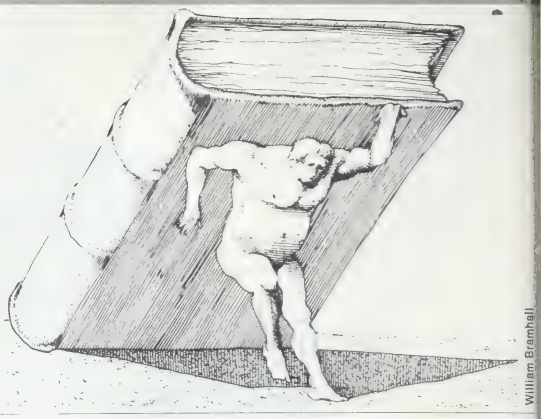
Thank you.

ten page and unviewable void or abyss, would be for Freud the image of primal repression, a defense prior to any drive against which we need to be defended. For criticism, the blank is the colorless all-color that is the white light of trope. Melville called this atheism, by which I think he meant atheism from a Gnostic stance, the denial of the alien, true god, or the sense that the invisible spheres had been formed in fright. Blank is whiteness or *blackness, with color excluded either way. Hence the pathos. . . . This is close to the comic squalor . . . that Beckett explores . . . because black and blank have the same root,* bhel, *to shine or flash. . . . The fire which burned to a white flame and left a white mark left also a black ash. White and black, blank and flame, the antithetical image of the poet Phosphor, reading by his own evening star light, mocks Miltonic tradition even as Hamm and Clov carry that tradition into its endgame.*

Und so weiter for thirty-two pages of no allure and sheer horror till on an ordinary Friday afternoon in that most ordinary of cities, New Haven, it culminates in Bloom's plunging without a thought into the imaginary mirror of his imagination and vanishing forever:

> *Leaves that do not transcend themselves do not cry out. If fantasia is really absent, then Stevens is hallucinating, but fantasia indeed is present, as Stevens wills in spite of his own will. The words of his poem belie his poem's lie against time, but the lie against time, which is transumption, is stronger. Here too an audible blank, as well as a visible one, is after all redressed. The cry may concern no one at all, except the strong reader, who will turn the leaves of Stevens' book and in that turning transume another cry, and yet another, in that work we are not required to complete, yet neither are we free to abandon.*

Would you mind repeating that last paragraph, Professor? You said it so fast that I didn't get it all down. Professor? Professor? What happened? Where'd he go? ■



William Bramhall

Classics by the Pound

by Hugh Kenner

The first four volumes in the Library of America are designed to sit on your bookshelf forever.

LATE this spring, tense in their cubicles, lips moving carefully, American book-page editors and their proofreaders were learning to spell "Pléiade," a word that kept jumping out at them from the flackery while forklifts trundled toward stockrooms the first four volumes in the Library of America.

The book I have just taken from my jacket pocket is Volume II of *Oeuvres de Flaubert* in the esteemed French series Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Seven eighths of an inch thick, it weighs twelve ounces. The pages are four inches wide, six and three quarters high, and there are a surprising 1,008 of them. Anywhere I open it the book lies flat, to display forty-three lines of highly legible text on a page that doesn't look crowded. Despite the extreme thinness of the sheet, what is printed on the reverse side doesn't show through. The gathering? Neatly sewn signatures, with a woven green marker attached. The binding? Flexible plastic-coated green leatherette, gold-stamped. The paper? I see no sign that it has discolored in thirty-four years. When I paid twelve Canadian dollars decades ago there was also a dust jacket, long since lost.

Flaubert's fiction consists of just six books, and Pléiade's Volume II contains three of them complete, in texts specially established for the series by two expert editors, who have also supplied historical and biographical introductions, textual and explanatory notes, appendices, and bibliographies: everything you'd

Hugh Kenner teaches at Johns Hopkins and has written many books, including The Pound Era.

want for serious reading. Volume I, all the rest of Flaubert's oeuvre, is somewhere upstairs.

That there was no American Pléiade seemed a scandal to the late Edmund Wilson, who as long ago as 1962 drew up a project for "bringing out in a complete and compact form the principal American classics." He did not envisage gestures of commemoration, just simple availability for books not to be found. "The only collected edition of Melville," he wrote, "was published in England in the Twenties and has been long out of print; and there is not, and has never been, of Henry James and Henry Adams any complete collected edition at all." A book here, a book there, and a long silence in between, was the best America did for the authors it claimed to be proud of.

"The kind of thing I should like to see," said Wilson, "would follow the example of the Editions de la Pléiade, which have included so many of the French classics, ancient and modern, in beautifully produced and admirably printed thin-paper volumes, ranging from 800 to 1,500 pages. These volumes, published by Gallimard, have evidently been commercially successful, for they are to be seen in every bookstore in Paris."

After two foundations had said no, the National Endowment for the Humanities said yes, and then something bureaucratic happened. Somehow, as Wilson understood it, a conspiracy of boondogglers doing business as the MLA Center for the Editions of American Authors contrived to get his funding suppressed in favor of a project of their own.

This was solemnly denied all round. Honest Injun, nobody at the Modern Language Association knew where Wilson's money had gone; all they knew was that they and platoons of honest toilers were indeed at work on diligent MLA-approved editions of Hawthorne, Melville, Howells, et al., with results Wilson was quick to deride. The books were whimsically chosen, he charged, outrageously expensive, and bespattered with the flyspecks of a ludicrous pedantry. A page looked like "something between an undecoded Morse message and a cuneiform inscription."

He was especially funny about eighteen Twain editors reading *Tom Sawyer*, word for word, backward, "in order to ascertain, without being diverted from this drudgery by attention to the story or the style, how many times 'Aunt Polly' is printed as 'aunt Polly,' and how many times 'ssst!' is printed as 'sssst!'" Since the MLA had ordained that "plain texts"—books you just *read* —were to await the establishment of "critical texts"—books that with full display of evidence sift out printer's errors and restore lost auctorial revisions—we'd be waiting, he estimated, "a century or longer."

If not exactly what Edmund Wilson envisaged, the Library of America has taken less time than that. "An American Pléiade," cried *The New York Times Book Review* last July, examining a crystal ball thoughtfully provided by the project's board. It seems that in 1979 the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities put up the kind of seed money Wilson had angled for, and the resulting books would be "in every way comparable to their French counterparts." No longer would visitors from abroad have to ask of American literature, "Where is it? And how can I take it home?" A great wrong, said the *Times*, would be set right, "and one of the capstones of American civilization put firmly in place."

Now that the first four titles are available, we can examine the Pléiade analogy. Here are three Melville novels in one volume (*Typee, Omoo, Mardi*), and when I lay down my Pléiade Flaubert to pick it up, I'm aware of hefting something *very heavy*. Thirty-one ounces, says the same kitchen scale that assessed the Flaubert at twelve. A two-pound book is not a thing you hold in your hand to read. You'll want a table. (If your bifocals have the right prescription, a lap will do.)

Where did that weight come from? Part of it from more pages: 1,342 as against 1,008. But one third more pages would raise the Flaubert to a mere sixteen ounces, still a two-to-one lightness advantage. So what else? Well, the Melville pages are bigger, four and seven eighths by seven and seven eighths, and the book is much thicker: an inch and three quarters. That means (1) there is no way it can be squeezed into a jacket pocket; (2) Melville, to be dankly physical about his fate, has been entombed in a block of acid-free wood pulp that uses up sixty-seven cubic inches of space, as against Flaubert's mere twenty-four. The *whole* of Flaubert—I've just found the second volume—totals fifty-four cubic inches, total weight twenty-seven ounces. You could stick half his oeuvre in each pocket and hardly notice.

But when the Melville part of the project is completed—four volumes —the *Times*'s hypothetical Frenchman who takes it home by air will find that the works of only one author leave him no space for less bulky souvenirs. He (or anyone) will find reading Melville physically uncomfortable for another reason. The excellent typeface has been imposed with scant regard for the "gutter," the center valley where facing pages meet. Those center margins are so narrow for so thick a book that parts of words disappear into the gutter unless you *force* the thing open *flat*.

No Library of America volume will get tossed into a knapsack. Too bricklike. If (speaking of gutters) rain falls onto the binding (imported Dutch dyed rayon), it will stain; raindrops on a Pléiade you merely wipe off. The paper, however, will last "for generations," so if you don't wear the books out with reading or let them get rained on, you can build an estate, the "personal library" one of the brochures mentions.

An American product just a little too cumbersome for normal maneuvers: that may sound familiar, and lead you to wonder if the Library of America was by any chance designed in Detroit. Scrutiny of the

press kit from Gail Rentsch Public Relations, 527 Madison Avenue, leaves me unable to say. That text was laid out by Bruce Campbell, whose past credits include part of the beautiful Bollingen series; the jackets are by Robert Scudellari with calligraphy by Gun Larson (according to my spies, two of the most expensive people in their line of work). But the overall physical package? No one is saying. Possibly a committee.

If so, its collective unconscious envisaged a buyer who thinks the Pléiades rather *light* for the money: someone requiring a substantial object for his twenty-five dollars ($19.95 by subscription through Time-Life Books), but with no immediate plans to spend hours reading, and certainly no intention of taking Melville along, the way the footloose in France take a Pléiade, on an airplane trip or a backpacking weekend.*

But suppose someone insists on reading. Is he offered editorial help? Yes, some. A five-page Melville chronology, a four-page note on the texts, seven and a half pages of textual and explanatory notes ("Sabine atrocity: The legendary rape of the Sabine women by the followers of Romulus, legendary founder of Rome"; dig the caution of that double "legendary"). Introductions, we are told, have been omitted because they date, and these books are to stay "permanently in print": it's unclear, though, what need date about the introductions we get in the Pléiade Flaubert, a compact arraying of facts about when the novels got written and what they drew on. Melville's three Pacific romances, which came partly from identifiable source books, partly from what he saw after he jumped ship in 1842 in the Marquesas, seem to ask for just such preliminaries.

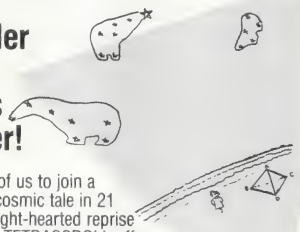
As for the texts, they are plain-text, i.e., "reading," derivations from one of the projects Edmund Wilson hooted at, the MLA-Northwestern-Newberry editions of 1968–70, and the "Note on the Texts" makes it clear that straightening out *Typee* in particular was a nasty job. It entailed getting rid of second-edition changes Melville made to calm a nervous American publisher (e.g., "lovely houris" for "naked houris") while trying to save other revisions he'd have made anyway. An editor would want to calibrate these changes with the help of the initial manuscript. But that has vanished, and for their "control" version of *Typee*—the only source for restoring numerous cut passages—the editors had to make do with a British edition that, in the course of being typeset from the lost manuscript, got infested with British spellings and usages. They persevered while Wilson grumbled, and the Library of America text of *Typee* is the best we're likely to get.

The other three inaugural volumes are uniform with the Melville; just as heavy, just as scrupulous. They include a Hawthorne (Volume I of four) a Stowe (three novels, including *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), and—especially notable—a Whitman *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, which wisely uses 145 pages to reprint the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, the anonymous twelve-part poem Emerson thought "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom America has yet contributed." Though *Leaves of Grass* subsequently became Walt's title for his ongoing interminable callithumpian collected poetry (here given in the final 1892 version), the integrity of that first sequence deserves the separate emphasis editor Justin Kaplan has accorded it.

Future volumes will include James in eight volumes, Emerson in four, Twain in six, Poe in two, Henry Adams in four . . . does the roll call sound familiar? It does, despite the inclusion of Jack London (two volumes, and billed as "the most inclusive collection available"). *That*, let us face it, is officially American Literature: something safely embalmed and (with London as wild card) long since defined at Harvard. Dead a mere sixty-five

* A friend writes: "Over the past several years I've put up a number of visitors from France. They have never failed to have a volume of the series shoved somewhere in the shoulder bag carried aboard."

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years, Henry James in that company seems ultramodern. Hemingway? Faulkner? Scott Fitzgerald? Pound? Olson? William Carlos Williams? (And what of Tom Eliot? Does he count as American? He abandoned his citizenship, but so did James.)

One difference between Jack London and Hemingway is that London was a storyteller and Hemingway was a "writer," what the French call an *écrivain*. Another is that Hemingway's copyrights were long ago sewed up by Charles Scribner's Sons. One difference between Pound and Whitman is that a legal committee controls every syllable of Pound's that gets into print. A proposal for a university press Ezra Pound, many volumes of texts to be straightened out and annotated, was scrapped a while back when the committee said no.

And one difference between Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–96) and Ross Macdonald (1915–) is that Macdonald, in devising his fables of modern identity, wrote them as things called "detective stories," handled at Harvard with tongs, whereas Mrs. Stowe's famous eleven-Kleenex tract, sanctified by a testimonial of Lincoln's, soars aloft into the Disneyfied sunsets of Literature. So the matter stands in 1982. But in a hundred years, if this series is still around, it either will have atrophied into total irrelevance or else will have managed to embalm three novels by Ross Macdonald. Just watch. And you read it here first.

So WHAT are our classics? Somehow the canon first got defined in New England, and its epicenter located in Concord, Mass. (Still, in a prospectus that runs to spring '84 I don't see Thoreau mentioned, or Emily Dickinson. The only edition of Dickinson to consider is owned by Harvard's Belknap Press, who have their own "plain text" version in print. Is that perhaps a problem?)

Ezra Pound thought the Concord canon unconvincing. *Real* American literature, he used to argue, stemmed not from a gaggle of New England clergymen's families and their acolytes but from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, notably their correspondence. (Jefferson is listed for fall '83: one volume. No John Adams. Henry, yes.)

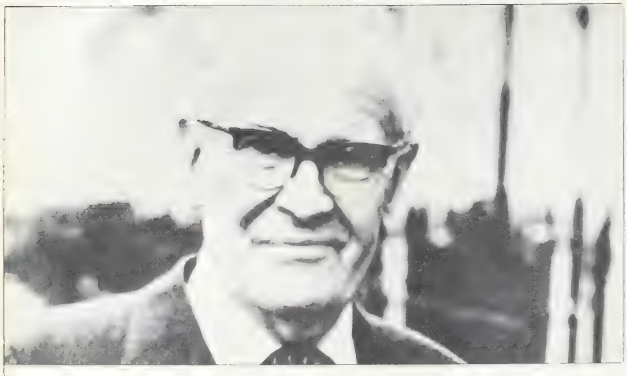
But however we define its past, American Literature became an indisputable entity at about the time it entered the international mainstream, first with James and then with overlapping generations born late in Whitman's lifetime: Pound's own generation and its immediate juniors, Pound-Eliot-Williams-Moore and Faulkner-Hemingway-Fitzgerald. Then Oppen-Zukofsky-Reznikoff followed, then Olson-Creeley . . . I've skipped names, but one pattern is clear. It continues to the Beats, e.g., Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Gary Snyder, who like Whitman often pretended semiliteracy as a way of outflanking the professoriat. (For light on Beatdom, see Michael McClure's new collection, *Scratching the Beat Surface*, published by North Point Press. McClure's becoming the Beats' elder statesman.)

The Library of America is perforce a bureaucratic enterprise, and bureaucratizing the realities of the past eighty years confronts it with special problems. One is copyrights. The Pléiade series, to revert to that one more time, includes a number of twentieth-century French writers —Proust, Valéry, Claudel, Gide, Camus. But these are Gallimard authors, and Gallimard publishes Pléiade. One reason there is no Pléiade Beckett may be that his French publisher is Editions de Minuit. And if so far the Library of America's formal announcements make no mention of anybody later than Henry James or Jack London (who coincidentally died in the same year, 1916), one reason may be that unlike Pléiade/Gallimard, it has no automatic access to any publisher's active list.

Another difficulty inheres in the word "American," which as used on expensive books adorned with a tricolor band connotes something we all agree on without thinking, a remote whole haziness with Lincoln somewhere near the middle and Teddy Roosevelt at the outermost bound. As Jack Kennedy is said to have said of the project back when Edmund Wilson was pushing it, "I know that its fulfillment will do a great deal to display, both to our own people and to the world, the richness of the American literary heritage." That does sound presidential. (And "JFK Supported the Idea," runs a heading in a press release.)

JFK's key word is "display," and once these shelf-fillers are on display, what next? The flack sheets offer come-ons for looking inside, behind which no particular conviction is discernible. Of *Mardi*: "Tracing the quest for the elusive and beautiful Yillah, it remains a timely political allegory and a thrilling adventure." Of Hawthorne: ". . . astonishingly contemporary . . . the reader at the end is left in a kind of awe at the multiple possibilities of meaning." Of racial violence in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: "some of the brooding imagination and realism that anticipates Faulkner's rendering of the same theme." Of Whitman: "elegiac, comic, furtive, outrageous." Such boiler plate is stamped from the very dies they use at the Classics Club to shill Aristotle, "this wise old Greek." We have brought you the packages, tied in red, white, and blue. They are substantial two-pound packages. We have even told you what thrills lurk within. Now let us all quietly contemplate America.

The trouble with more contemporary books is that, read or not, they arouse passions. Did misgivings leap in your blood when I spoke of including Ross Macdonald? That's what I mean. And the howl over "Howl"—"*American?*"; I can hear it from here. There are remarks in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fit to raise Jewish hackles ("One would think you had taken lessons of the Jews, coming at a fellow so!"), but Pound in the Library of America is what would trigger letters to congressmen. By unspoken consensus, books a century old are safe. Transfer them to acid-free paper bound with the grain and Smyth-sewn, and lo, a capstone of American civilization, firmly in place, Grant's Tomb. ■



Victor Victorious

by William Abrahams

V. S. Pritchett, the grand old man of English letters.

Collected Stories, by V. S. Pritchett. Random House, 544 pages. $20.

THE TWO great, contrasting ancestral figures in the history of the modern short story are Anton Chekhov and Guy de Maupassant. Traditionally, their examples are thought to be irreconcilable. Writers exist in the ambience of one or the other, but never both. V. S. Pritchett, however, born with the century, is a Grand Old Man of English letters and, at the age of eighty-one, still very much a working writer, who combines in his work the best characteristics of both of these classic, unavoidable Europeans.

Pritchett writes with a breadth of interest and sympathy for a remarkable variety of characters that we associate with Chekhov; and with a shapeliness of form, a clarity of style, and a structural ingenuity that we associate with Maupassant. And yet, paradoxically, his stories are the embodiment of Englishness. Almost without exception, the settings are English. So are his characters—the idiosyncrasies of their behavior and what happens to them. It is impossible to imagine the stories reset, recast, or retold elsewhere.

The present volume contains twenty-nine stories chosen from among the more than a hundred that he has published in individual collections from the 1930s to the 1980s. It is typical of Pritchett's unflagging energies that his most recent stories are among his best. Evidently he arrived at his prime early and will leave it late. Old age has not been an impediment to achievement; instead it presents him with new material, a new vantage point. While young writers can imagine what it is like to be old, Pritchett knows. Part of the fascination of a very late story, "On the Edge of the Cliff," is the way it runs counter to the stereotypes of sentimental fantasy, and replaces them with the authenticity of experience.

Given his omnivorous curiosity about life—the raw material of his fiction—and his eagerness to follow it where it will, I think it an act of happy fate that Pritchett was born into the lower-middle, or shopkeeper, class, and so was denied the disabling disadvantages of an upper-middle-class English upbringing—no fashionable public school, no ancient university. Freed of the constraints they might have imposed on him, he was able to explore and saturate himself in the lower to upper-middle levels of the micro-multileveled English social structure. He is at ease writing of a baker, a sailor, a kept woman, a working farmer, a suburban housewife, the owner of an antique shop—the whole gallery of odd, ordinary people who populate his stories—in a way that would have been unlikely if he had been born, and in due course inhibited, higher on the ladder.

SIGNIFICANTLY, in the present collection he has chosen nothing from his first book of stories, *The Spanish Virgin,* written in the 1920s. In his preface he tells us why: "I was learning my craft, seduced by many influences and had not yet found a distinctive voice which is indispensable to the short-story writer and the poet. By the 1930s I had at any rate discovered my voice and that my native bent was to the designs of comedy and its ironies."

Writers who are drawn to "comedy and its ironies" very often have in their makeup a streak of cruelty or heartlessness—perhaps a vestigial remnant of a joyless childhood—that discloses itself in a certain contempt for the characters they write about (butterflies pinned to the page) and the world in which they, authors and characters alike, live. One thinks of a tradition of English comic writing that might take in W. S. Gilbert, Saki, Ronald Firbank, the early Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh, and so on down to our own times and the bleak hilarity of Joe Orton.

Although Pritchett is often delightfully funny—as in "The Diver," a high-spirited account of a young man (English, of course) losing his virginity in Paris (of course)—and although he responds with a razor-like keenness to the ironies of every-

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day life, there is an absence of cruelty in his writing, a presence of affection, a kind of rapport, and a kind of respect, for even the least respectable of his characters. It would be difficult to imagine any of the writers I have mentioned above saying, as Pritchett does in his preface, "I have always thought it the duty of writers to justify their people, for we all feel that for good or ill, we are exceptional and justified in being what we are."

To be sure, a kind heart, a generous nature, a vigorous intelligence, an active curiosity, and a fully developed sense of humor don't in themselves a great writer make. There must also be a mastery of the language, and that is a gift Pritchett enjoys in abundance. It is evident in whatever he writes, but nowhere more impressively than in his stories, perhaps because, as he acknowledged twenty-five years ago, "the practice of the short story has been the delightful and compensating art and the only kind of writing that has given me great pleasure. It has always elated me."

Pritchett's stories in embryo are anecdotes. Once there was a man who, and a woman who, and he did thus and she did thus and . . . A sailor, stranded on the beach, so to speak, is taken as a kindness by a writer to his house in the country to work as a sort of houseman; presently he attracts the eye of a neighboring lady, feels himself threatened, and flees back to the safety of shipboard. An elderly man, retired and living with his children, goes into London, as though on business, gets caught up with a group of younger people, and joins them in a spree. A widowed farmer is determined to have his daughter keep house for him; however, the daughter is very bright, and a young woman teacher is determined the girl shall have a chance at an education, but the duel between father and schoolteacher that ensues is enlivened by sexual overtones, a mix of animosity and attraction.

Anecdotes of this sort become works of art as told by Pritchett, but reduced in someone else's retelling or paraphrase to their anecdotal content—the mere chronology of events—they lose all their magic, all the life that art has brought them.

THE ANECDOTE is for Pritchett what the "*donnée*" was for Henry James: the point of departure. He tells us in his preface that "only once—and that was when I was twenty-three and beginning—did I take down the scene, the character and the conversation straight from life. . . . Since that lucky moment—never repeated —I have had to dig my stories out of myself and out of random events, reimagined. . . . 'Real' life, as it is, people as they are, are useless until art reveals what life merely suggested."

Part of the elation of which Pritchett speaks (and which readers may feel also) comes from the way in which anecdote is transformed into story, ramifying outwardly and inwardly from the sequence of events to a point where the man and the woman preempt our interest; they, not the anecdote about them, become the true, involving story.

"On the Edge of the Cliff" illustrates the transformation beautifully. The story of a man in his seventies in love with a girl in her twenties who is in love with him, it is replete with the "designs of comedy and its ironies." A situation of this kind almost invariably invites a self-pitying sentimentalism, or else a hard-edged mockery, yet Pritchett does not for a moment come close to either.

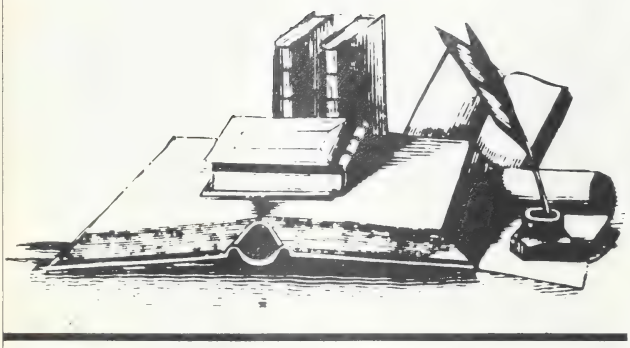
How is it done? Pritchett is a master of tones, and as he modulates from one to another he achieves a subtle polyphony of effects. He opens with a paragraph of descriptions, cluster by cluster, each in its own mode truthful and exact, changing the tones to be poetic, ironic, sympathetic, and deflatingly comic in turn:

> *The sea fog began to lift towards noon. It had been blowing in, thin and loose for two days, smudging the tops of the trees up the ravine where the house stood. "Like the cold breath of old men," Rowena wrote in an attempt at a poem, but changed the line, out of kindness, to "the breath of ghosts," because Harry might take it personally. The truth was that his breath was not foggy at all, but* smelt *of the dozens of cigarettes he smoked all day. He would walk about, taking little steps, with his hand outstretched, tapping the ash off as he talked. This gave an abstracted searching elegance which his heavy face and long sentences needed. In her dressing gown Rowena went to his room. His glasses were off and he had finished shaving and he turned a face savaged to the point of saintliness by age, but with a heavy underlip that made him look helplessly brutal. She laughed at the soap in his ears.*

From the fog "smudging the tops of the trees" to the girl's laughter at the soap in his ears, we have in one paragraph something of Pritchett's range—and a paragraph that, incidentally, fulfills his own prescription that the story writer must "catch our attention at once . . . get the opening line right."

Marvelous writing is rare at any time and especially to be prized now, when prose too often is in the hands of academicians, preachers, and politicians. I could explicate and quote from Pritchett's stories page by page, but in so doing I would deprive readers of the pleasure of their own discoveries. One more paragraph from "On the Edge of the Cliff" should suffice:

> *It was exciting for her to drive the old man dangerously fast down the long circling lane through the trees, to show how dangerous she could be, while he talked. He would talk nonstop for the next hour. . . . Historical instances poured out of him. He was, she said, Old Father Time himself, but he did not take that as a joke, though he humoured her with a small laugh. It was part of the game. He was not Father Time, for in one's seventies, one is a miser of time, putting it by, hiding the minutes, while she spent fast, not knowing she was living in time at all.* ■



The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism, by Michael Novak. Simon and Schuster, 448 pages. $17.50.

LIKE George Gilder, Michael Novak sets out to provide capitalism with an inspiring moral vision worthy of its impressive practical achievements. Unlike Gilder, Novak does not sanctify entrepreneurial activity itself (Gilder "goes too far," Novak says, when he describes investment as an act of "altruism" and "love"). Novak chooses an indirect strategy, making a case for capitalism that is "merely realistic," and then making a theological case for realism. His argument is interesting because it specifically attacks the "dream of democratic socialism," while renouncing the two most common moral defenses of our current system: libertarianism (free exchange and property as rights) and utilitarianism (the market economy as happiness maximizer). The status quo Novak defends is not the economists' model but the real status quo: a "trinitarian" system in which the profit-making market is checked by both a democratic polity and a pluralist culture.

Many of Novak's characterizations of capitalist practice seem not realistic but grossly idealized, particularly his testimonials to the farsightedness of our corporate leaders. Does General Electric really build factories abroad because "they decide the work they contemplate will, eventually, have to be done by somebody," or, rather, because they want to make a buck? And oddly, for someone who praises the dynamic, revolutionary effects of capitalism, Novak seems compelled to defend the existing regime in each of its details. All that was profane is now sacred, apparently, including inheritance laws, nonprofit organizations, the divorce of ownership from management, the Wagner Act, the Constitution's separation of powers, the antitrust laws. Novak exalts the hammerlock of interest groups on Congress as an example of "pluralism in moral vision." His "trinitarian" structure even conveniently accommodates and justifies the left-wing enemies of unbridled profit-seeking—they are necessary too, as part of democratic capitalism's "especially potent moral-cultural system."

Ultimately, Novak's will-to-rationalize, his smug sense that everything in our society is in its appropriate place (even the evils are just the product of man's inevitable burden of sin), make his book more than a bit spiritually deadening. Doesn't anything make him *angry*?

R.M.K.

Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South, by Bertram Wyatt-Brown. Oxford University Press, 375 pages. $29.95.

THIS BOOK represents an enormous academic accomplishment, so encompassing that the extensive pages of footnotes require a guide to abbreviations and short titles seventy-seven items long. The theme is singular and direct—through understanding the nature of honor, we can understand the nature of the premodern South. Those who get frustrated with the slow but articulate drawls of Southerners will get impatient with the book. Wyatt-Brown, professor of history at Case Western Reserve University, recognizes this. In his introduction he does not apologize for his methods, but prepares the reader for what he has done, how he did it, and why. He is focusing on white people's notions of right actions, not the conceptions of free blacks or slaves, though slavery inevitably weaves in and out of his theme; his emphasis is on law, not religion; W. J. Cash (*The Mind of the South*) and C. Vann Woodward, whose student he was, influenced him greatly. He took his time and made a lot of friends during his exhaustive research.

Exploring the full meaning of honor is a formidable task. He relates Southern honor to the paradigmatic works of Malory, Tacitus, and Homer; to the temperaments of Alexander Hamilton and Andrew Jackson; and, more generally, to topics such as sexual misconduct and the anatomy of wife killing. In literature Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* probably ties in most obviously with Southern attitudes toward slavery, sexual misconduct, and wife killing, and it's not left out. But the author chooses to focus instead on Hawthorne's short story "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," set in early

eighteenth-century New England, because in Wyatt-Brown's eyes Hawthorne deals most masterfully with honor. This is the author's approach throughout—take the obvious case in point, but don't stop there. Though the preoccupation with detail can become wearying, much of the historical detective work has produced results that, whether provocative or charming, are always enlightening. He has done an honorable job, and this is an honorable work. **J.B.**

Last Night's Stranger: One Night Stands & Other Staples of Modern Life, edited by Pat Rotter. A&W, 384 pages. $16.95.

ONE-NIGHT stands may be problematical and hazardous, but so is writing about them. Pat Rotter, the editor of this collection of twenty-six stories, proclaims in her introduction that the short story is "the perfect medium to express these relationships." However, she then conveniently stretches this premise to cover "the realities, the fantasies more real than reality, of our impermanent lives." In this way she can include authors as diverse as John Irving, Gail Godwin, Robert Coover, Hilma Wolitzer, Richard Selzer, Joy Williams, and Joyce Carol Oates—writing on sex, lust, love, and change.

The common denominator here is mobility. People meet on planes and in bus stations; they pick each other up in hospital wards, at conventions, and by the side of the road. They are emotionally skittish, stoking their secret raunchy fantasies in subways and elevators. They make lists of past lovers as revenge on current ones, or suddenly walk out on a spouse after breakfast. Nobody worries about herpes. What turns them on may be grotesque: a woman pants her way through simultaneous intercourse and labor ("Your period start?" asks the man obtusely, afterward). In the book's most graphic story, Lynda Schor imagines a married couple whose dwindling enthusiasm for each other is revived by a horse so conscientious that he might have been reading *The Joy of Sex*. She thereby proves that those who write most explicitly about sex are the most likely to contract purple prose. It happened to D. H. Lawrence, after all.

A reader who is prepared to trudge on past all the private parts and busy couplings will fall on the good stories—and there are several—with relief. The best of them, by Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Doris Betts, effectively escape the limitations of the book's title. Doris Betts, in her story "The Ugliest Pilgrim," writes about a Tennessee mountain woman making a lonely trip by bus to a TV preacher in Tulsa who, she fervently hopes, will make her pretty. She is befriended by two soldiers in transit. The connections that suddenly form between them are complex, subtle, and fierce. When the woman timidly writes in her notebook, "Praise God for Knoxville and two new friends," the reader can share her pleasure, for, like all good writers, Betts opens a window on other people's lives. **H.R.**

Midnights, by Alec Wilkinson. Random House, 192 pages. $11.95.

MIDNIGHTS" are what policemen term their midnight-to-eight-A.M. shifts on patrol. Since these shifts are mostly boring and uncomfortable, rookie cops get to do a lot of them. Alec Wilkinson was one such rookie when he joined the Wellfleet, Mass., police force in 1975, fresh out of Bennington. Endearingly, it seems he couldn't think of anything better to do. He only signed on for a year, but it was long enough to give him the material for this skinny book. Then he retreated to what was perhaps a more appropriate beat, reporting for *The New Yorker*.

Two things emerge from Wilkinson's pleasant, if rather disorganized, account: first, how tedious and aimless large amounts of police work have to be; second, how extraordinarily incompetent the author was in his constabulary duties. Wellfleet is a small town on Cape Cod, once the home of Edmund Wilson and other literary lights, and known to outsiders largely as a summer-vacation place. Midnights are customarily passed driving round and round the town, quelling rowdy teenagers, stopping drunk drivers, checking on locked vacation cottages, and surreptitiously reading or getting forty winks. Wilkinson seems to have been incapable of such pursuits without getting into trouble with his chief or the local selectmen, falling asleep, ruining the cruiser by driving through the woods and into the backs of other cars—or just being in the wrong place at the wrong moment.

The author is hardly to blame, but I missed comparison with routine police work in other places. It's difficult to get a sense of how typical Wellfleet is, though one of Wilkinson's colleagues asserts that just about every call he'd heard in Washington, D.C., he'd heard in Wellfleet. "The only difference is the tone. In D.C. . . . the guy's real low-key, like he's bored, you know, heard it all before . . . In Wellfleet they say, *'Charlie One, I think there's a B and E going on! Some lady just called me and, ah, ah, there's people going in the back window! And the Johnsons who live next door where the apple cart used to be say they're inside now! Do you want me to call the state police?'*"

Wilkinson does not report what his colleagues thought of the somewhat unusual background of their brother-in-arms. They seem mostly good-humored and tolerant of his blunders on the job, but didn't they resent him at all, or think of him as a college-educated, guitar-playing idler with nothing better to do for a year than take the bread out of the mouth of some more deserving local? And didn't he ever feel awkward around them? Wilkinson's *New Yorker*-style technique—accumulation of minute detail—helps him, whether he's conscious of it or not, to avoid discussion of such sensitive topics. **T.G.**

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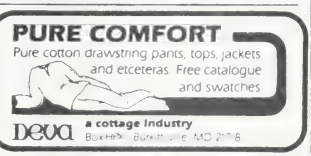
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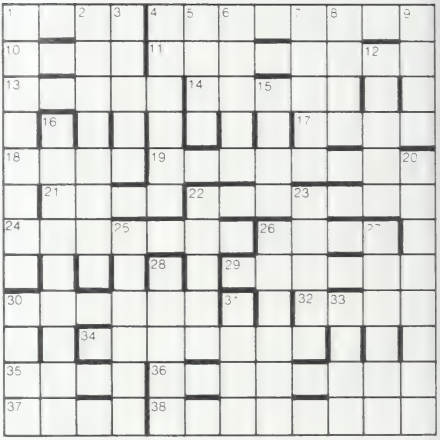
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Clubs for Clues

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.



This month's instructions:

Each clue answer must be altered before it is entered in the diagram. This alteration is done by changing one letter, making a new word . . . but you can only change a vowel to a consonant, or vice versa. Count *y* among the vowels. The altered letter is always an unaltered letter in a crossing word.

Clue answers include one slang word (11A). Diagram entries include one word from underworld slang (19A), one hyphenated word (27D), and one proper name (32A). As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 6.

CLUES

ACROSS

1. Suites without center courts (4)
4. False report about Missouri pusher (8)
10. An inexperienced person's left in bed (4)
11. Asylum's possibly tenuous housing for . . . hothead?(8)
13. Ravel's arrangement of tune enthralls me (5)
14. Brew with strong character (5)
17. Use foul language during discussion (4)
18. Well-founded concern (4)
19. Pathetic form of gout covers chin (8)
21. Shoot male involved in what some call the women's movement (4)
22. Sew tear ruining piece of clothing (7)
24. Plexiglas, e.g., for $100—it's a record return (7)
26. Fisherman's net heard in sound (4)
29. St. Peter initially encountered regressive lures (6)
30. *Quest for Fire*'s mark on church (6)
32. Units for current campsite houses (4)
34. Can I, subsequent to damage, drink (7)
35. Smug and ingratiating associates spoil you (4)
36. Choice, even when second is first! (8)
37. In building addition, top off vertical shafts (4)
38. It's an awful defeat to lose war shamefully, with South seceding (8)

DOWN

1. French chef's specialties, thus taking 75 percent of truffles (8)
2. Man later reformed, displaying great affection (8)
3. What's helpful isn't helpful at all after false start! (5)
4. Two loves: getting drunk and English rock (6)
5. Bar U.S. to deviates (4)
6. Away from the center route, being detoured (5)
7. Piano and orchestra covered entrance (5)
8. Expressions of disapproval limiting turkey shoots (4)
9. To make a new start on things this Lent is reminiscent (4)
12. Drove around the start of Chisholm Trail (5)
15. Stretch ribs (4)
16. I'm upset for fear that any person is making a significant development (9)
20. German getting up and complaining (8)
22. Soldier is taken in by the capsized racing boat's crew (5)
23. They illuminate swaying palms (5)
25. Slight indications: small skin disfigurements turning up (6)
26. Position, in this example (6)
27. An incredibly large number, with energy, love golf, but don't finish it (6)
28. Endless device for sifting heap of stones (5)
30. Labor leader in plant creates delay (4)
31. Power didn't become heartless (4)
32. Nobleman's audience left (4)

CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to Clubs for Clues, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by August 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the September issue. Winners' names will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the June puzzle, "Code 13," are Janet H. Brown, Darien, Connecticut; Lemuel R. Green, Canton, Ohio; and Mrs. J. C. Johnson, Ranch Santa Fe, California.

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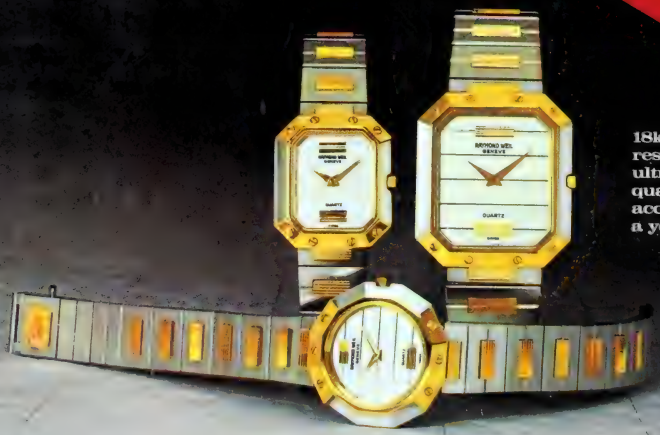
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A Simplified Income Tax

Imagine an income tax so simple and straightforward that all you do is add up your income for the year and send a modest percentage of it to Uncle Sam. No deductions. No shelters. No loopholes. The same rate would apply to all, across the board.

The idea of a flat-rate tax has been around for years. Today it's bubbling up afresh in the mounting frustration over budget deficits and the nation's economic troubles, along with public disaffection with the existing tax system.

The flat tax has supporters in both parties and across the political spectrum. Several bills on it have been introduced in Congress. The tax rates being discussed generally range below 25%. The top rate is now 50%.

Advocates see the flat tax as a way to stimulate productive enterprise and steer the economy back on a growth path. The idea is that people would be encouraged to work harder, take greater risks, and invest and save more because they'd be able to keep more of what they earned. No longer would they be taxed at ever-higher rates as their income rose.

In addition, proponents say, there would be more equity in the tax system. All would pay their fair share. Shelters and loopholes would be done away with. Cheating through fraudulent deductions would be eliminated.

In pure form, a flat tax would have no exemptions or deductions. But purity would have to give way to practicality. There should be an element of progressiveness: higher rates for higher income earners.

Most current discussion centers on providing for a base of exempt income. The exemption, for example, could be the first $10,000 of income. With a flat rate of 10%, someone with an income of $20,000 would pay a tax of $1,000. The effective rate would be 5%. A person with $100,000 in income would pay a tax of $9,000, or an effective rate of 9%.

Greater progressivity could be achieved through a tax of two or three tiers. One proposal calls for no tax on income below $17,500, a rate of 18% on incomes from $17,500 to $50,000, and 25% above $50,000.

Numerous options are being discussed. One is to have no income exempted from taxation. Instead, each person would get a $250 tax credit. For a family of four, total credit of $1,000 would be equivalent to an exemption of $10,000, given a 10% rate.

Arriving at a simple flat tax would be anything but simple. State and local governments depend on their ability to issue tax-free bonds. Institutions, organizations, and causes of all sorts need contributions that are now tax-deductible. Homeowners cherish the deductibility of their mortgage interest. All these things would have to be worked out carefully.

A streamlined tax has considerable appeal in its potential for simplicity, fairness, and revenue-raising effectiveness. It's an idea that merits full scrutiny and debate.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

Harper's

SEPTEMBER 1982 FOUNDED IN 1850/VOL. 265, NO. 1588

LETTERS 4



Capitalism Observed: RICH DOCTORS, POOR NURSES David Osborne 8
Testing our notions about a fair day's pay.

Baggage: THE $310 MILLION PARANOIA SUBSIDY Patrick Brogan 17
All those airport X-ray machines are a waste of money.

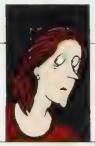
Warfare: SIMPLE TANKS WOULD SUFFICE William S. Lind 22
The wars in the Falklands and Lebanon showed the value of uncomplicated weapons and sophisticated tactics.



The Fourth Estate: THE GOSSIP'S CODE Diana McLellan 25
Rule 2: get it right—or else liven it up.

WAITING FOR INTERFERON Charles Fox 32
In 1972 the author discovered he had multiple sclerosis. In 1980 he heard about interferon. Now he wants some. What happens when people's hopes run ahead of the scientific method.





DESIGNS FOR LIVING Posy Simmonds 47
Reaction.

SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS GOES TO THE ZOO J. C. Suares 48
It's dog eat dog among the animals in Cairo.



A TOMB WITH A VIEW Paul Theroux 50
A story.

TOO MUCH JUSTICE Stuart Taylor, Jr. 56
Why it took fifteen months and millions of dollars not to send John Hinckley to prison. An account of a criminal justice system gone berserk—and not only because of the verdict.

Palpitations: STOP ME BEFORE I WRITE AGAIN James Wolcott 67
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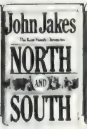
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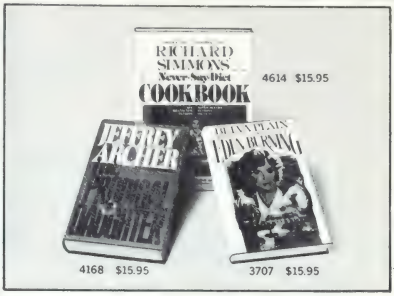
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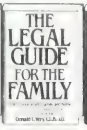
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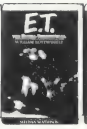
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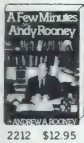
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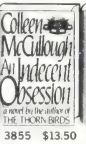
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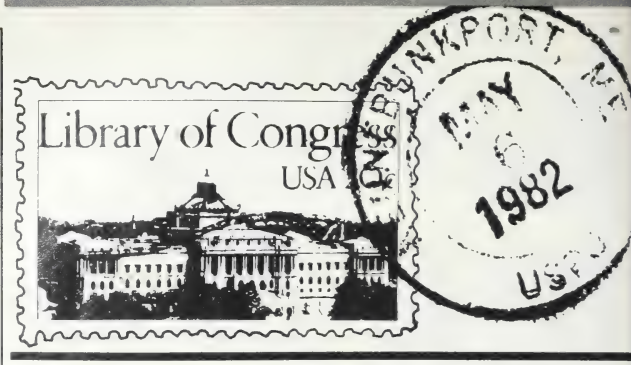
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are very welcome, especially if they are short and typed double-spaced. We enjoy hearing from readers, even though volume precludes individual acknowledgment.



Life after death

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's work on death and dying is too profound a subject to be viewed as flippantly as Ron Rosenbaum did in his article "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Dead" [*Harper's*, July]. Kübler-Ross has brought the subjects of death and dying more into the open. Teaching people to accept the feelings of the dying doesn't by any stretch of the imagination mean worshiping the dying, simply that the dying should be able to talk openly about their anxieties with their loved ones so that when death comes it will be more peaceful for both sides.

To say that Kübler-Ross believes in either "playing dead" or "playing with the dead" is ludicrous. She simply wants to learn more about man's capacity for various states of consciousness. Along with other researchers like Raymond Moody, Dr. Kübler-Ross believes that death is a transition from one state of consciousness to another.

I went to Escondido and talked to some of the women who work at Kübler-Ross's administrative offices, Shanti Nilaya, and I was fairly convinced that what the media were saying about Jay Barham was true. After Kübler-Ross realized what Barham had been doing and dismissed him, she was very reluctant to talk to anyone from the press. She was very careful in what she said to me, and taped me as I taped her. She did not discuss with me exactly what she knew about Barham, even though I pressed her on this. I felt she knew what had happened. She told me she was more disappointed in him than she had been in any other human being she had ever known.

Does Mr. Rosenbaum mean that because Kübler-Ross was once hoodwinked by a con man that her work is no longer valid? Subjects such as death, dying, psychic abilities, and E.S.P. often attract those who seek simplistic, magical solutions to their problems rather than more meaningful answers, and also the charlatans who are only too eager to make a quick buck from such people's gullibility. But there may still be some things we don't know about life. To deny death is to deny reality; to deny reality is to deny life.

JOAN SAUNDERS WIXEN
Los Angeles, Calif.

In "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Dead," Ron Rosenbaum explores absurdities in the "death awareness movement" but vitiates much of his own argument by superficial research and inaccurate reporting. The proposition that Elisabeth Kübler-Ross "single-handedly created the death-and-dying movement" is simply untrue. Dr. Kübler-Ross's book *On Death and Dying* (1969) was her first contribution to a field already established by numerous psychologists and ethicists concerned with issues of terminal care and dying.

The contention that Dr. Kübler-Ross, again single-handedly, "revolutionized and restructured the worship of death in America" through her concept of five stages of dying does not stand up to scrutiny, even allowing for its tongue-in-cheek overtones. The "five stages" concept has been widely discredited by such distinguished psychologists as Robert Kastenbaum and Edwin Shneidman.

There is no question that a number of individuals and groups operating on a southern California–SoHo axis have encouraged attempts to commu-

nicate with the dead through old-fashioned séances enacted in contemporary dress (or undress). These activities, which prey on the grief-stricken and gullible, are indefensible. But evidence of abuses on the part of a few cannot support the author's conclusion that "it begins to seem that thinking about death is, like heroin, not something that people are capable of doing in small doses and then going about the business of life." This contention appears to be based on what Mr. Rosenbaum perceives, perhaps correctly, as Dr. Kübler-Ross's intellectual deterioration. It ignores the great number of doctors, nurses, psychologists, and chaplains who have made caring for the dying their life-work without ODing on it, and overlooks the dedication and achievement of rational, thoughtful people in organizations like Concern for Dying and the Thanatology Foundation.

DONALD W. MCKINNEY
President, Concern for Dying
New York, N.Y.

In his article in the July *Harper's*, Ron Rosenbaum states that "Kübler-Ross and the American death-and-dying movement took their inspiration from the British 'hospice' idea but neglected to import one crucial ingredient that made it work"—namely, Brompton's Cocktail, with its "pure heroin" and "pure cocaine." He further says, "Unable to offer their dying clients the kind of truly effective and humane pain relief available to the British, American death professionals . . . have overcompensated for this failure . . . with massive injections of sentimentality, a syrupy overdose of sanctimony about the 'beauty' of the dying process, about 'learning from pain.'"

Wrong on all counts. Cocaine has not been used at St. Christopher's Hospice, London, the most basic of "your basic British hospices," since the mid-1970s, having been found by Dr. Robert Twycross to produce no noticeable change in patients when discontinued. Dr. Raymond W. Houde found heroin gave shorter-acting pain relief than morphine, and thus most American hospices have had no need to import from England any crucial ingredient to "make it work."

As a hospice nurse active in caring for terminally ill patients for four years, I can state categorically that hospice professionals are not promoting sentimentality or romanticizing about the beauty of dying. The hospice movement is about LIFE, not death, about living to the fullest as the patient wishes by eliminating those symptoms that make life not worth living. In hospice care we see that life may include anger, hope, fighting, or peaceful faith; it's the patient's life and his or her choice of the manner of living it, to the very end.

MAJOR THOMAS, R.N.
Dallas, Tex.

RON ROSENBAUM REPLIES:

It's a shame that Kübler-Ross, for all her belief in "sharing" and "openness," has stonewalled inquiries about the spiritualist sex fraud she fell for. By refusing to speak to anyone but compliant sycophants like Saunders Wixen, she's failed to "share" the unpleasant truth with her thousands of gullible followers, thereby hoodwinking them as thoroughly as the pathetic con man who tricked her.

It's not at all surprising that Major Thomas, who rhapsodizes that the Death 'n' Dying movement is "about LIFE," fails to recognize the repellent sanctimony that pervades the writings of her fellow death professionals. And however much Kübler-Ross would now like to revise the meaning of her "five stages of dying," I have heard from a number of relatives of dying patients who have seen "death professionals" urge their gravely ill loved ones to "move on" from the "anger stage" of fighting for their life to the "more mature stage of acceptance."

Finally, my source for the heroin/morphine/cocaine comments is Sandol Stoddard's 1977 text *The Hospice Movement*, which speaks about the "problem for American hospices" when they sought to administer the original English heroin-coke combo. The fact that the original formula has recently been changed does not invalidate my observation about its importance to the origin of the hospice movement.

Reason to believe

Christopher Hitchens is certainly entitled to his atheism, but not necessarily to claim its intellectual and moral superiority to religious faith. His essay ["The Lord and the Intellectuals," *Harper's*, July] presumes more for atheism than it warrants, while it ignores the vital risk that makes faith such an exciting intellectual and moral option.

First, believers aren't all that dumb. It is a commonplace of apologetics (the branch of theology that deals with the reasoned explanation of faith) that God's existence is just as impossible to prove rationally as his non-existence. This certainly does not automatically make atheism the more enlightened option. In fact, both the atheist and the believer make commitments of the mind and heart, but in reverse order. The atheist says, "I will trust only what I can know for sure; my commitment (or, in this case, non-commitment) must be the product of reason." The believer, on the other hand, says, "Reason is a whore. Both my and the atheist's views are constructed from premises, and it is these premises that inherently shape both the course and the end of all argumentation. The most important question to me, therefore, is not whose conclusion is more reasonable but what assumptions and experiences I adopt as my starting points, and why."

The believer seems to me to be the more honest of the two. He does not delude himself that his intellectual method is self-validating, but realizes that commitments and the process of sorting them out are what render his understanding of the world, and the motivations for his actions, both meaningful and sensible.

A more vexing problem with Hitchens's essay is that he throws up a smoke screen that I thought had disappeared for good. He impugns the religious option by pointing to the unsavory, cynical, and confused people who have hidden behind it. To put it in the format supplied by Aristotelian logic, the fact that all horse thieves are Democrats does not mean that all Democrats are horse thieves. Even less does it mean that the existence of horse thievery constitutes an argument against the world view of the Democratic Party.

In a similarly flawed assertion, Hitchens says that "since it is obviously inconceivable that all religions can be right, the most reasonable conclusion is that they are all wrong." But it is eminently reasonable to go on the hypothesis that one or the other is right and the rest wrong, that some are correct about some things and hopelessly wrong about others, etc. Similarly, the assertion that "atheism . . . is the only sure way to regard all our fellow creatures as brothers and sisters" is just silly. When did the atheists corner the market on creaturely fellow feeling? I must have missed it while at prayers.

But when Hitchens turns his attention to the religious mentality as the real danger for intellectuals who have

Report from the Letters Lady

Warren Keith Wright of Arbyrd, Missouri, feels that over the last year *Harper's* has descended to a new magazine genre that he christens "sneer" journalism; an "attempt to demolish your opponents not by refutation but by sneers." Along with Tom Wolfe's "From Bauhaus to Our House," Bryan Griffin's "Panic Among the Philistines," and Ron Rosenbaum's more recent "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Dead," he classifies "the world-weary attitude of the Letters Lady" as typical of "this new and dismissive hauteur." I am far from weary of this world, Mr. Wright; indeed, I would say my attitude is characterized, as it were, by a fervent embrace of life in all its myriad manifestations—so to speak. But I know what you're getting at. One of the goals we aspire to is a spirited debunking of commonly accepted but frequently unexamined views of all kinds; but we are trying to be constructive, too, to put forward alternative views and proposals at the same time, and the thoughtful but critical reader is our best ally in this.

It strikes me that the Rev. Patrick F. Halfpenny, from the archdiocese of Detroit, should be doing a little critical reading of his secretary's typing when he comments on magazine articles, particularly since he is director of the office of communications:

> *At the risk of enobling* [*sic*] *Steve Salerno's "All This and Heaven Too" begged* [*sic*] *for some response.*
>
> *It is inaccurate to simply borrow labels from the political sphere, and apply then* [*sic*] *to bishops. "Liberal" and "Conservative" cannot capture a particular bishops* [*sic*] *commitment to the renewal of the Second Vatican Council. It also simplistically lumps together moral and disciplinary questions. The Church law requiring priestly cilibacy* [*sic*] *for Roman Catholic priests could change. Divine law upholding the sanctity of life could not.*
>
> *There are other objectives* [*sic*]. *I resented his labeling Fr. O'Brien's voice as "almost paronoid"* [*sic*]. *I did not realize such a psychological assessment was possible.*
>
> *The Church is far form* [*sic*] *perfect, precisely because it is populated by humanity. Ordination does no* [*sic*] *obliterate that humanity.*

Indeed, the Church is far form perfect. Happily the presentation of most of our readers' letters is a good deal more felicitous. See you next month. ■

lost the courage of their nonbelief, he is on more solid ground. Interestingly, his warning puts him in the company of the most influential Christian theologian of the twentieth century, Karl Barth. Barth argued vehemently for the distinction between faith (the work of God in people) and religion (the ritualized human activity mounted in response to that work). Religion, according to Barth, always threatens to take on a life of its own, generating a greater investment in its procedures than in its object—God. The result is always the kind of things that trouble Hitchens, what Barth calls unbelief. We have much to be wary of in the religious mentality, but not because it is intellectually inferior to atheism. The danger is that it is too much a mentality, and too little a faith.

BRUCE O. BOSTON
Fairfax, Va.

In his article on religion, Christopher Hitchens argues that atheism minimizes "the totalitarian temptation." Mr. Hitchens suggests that since believers must give up their reason in order to believe in God, they become susceptible to blind worship and unthinking devotion. Such an uncritical attitude then allows totalitarian dictators to rise up and gain power over them.

If this were indeed the case, one might wonder why it is that the explicitly atheistic doctrine of Marxism-Leninism has produced the most deeply entrenched totalitarian state in existence today—the Soviet Union. In general, atheism in communist states has failed abysmally to resist totalitarian aggression. Such a glaring oversight in Mr. Hitchens's argument indicates that he has misunderstood some crucial features of the Christian religion and of atheism. For it is Christianity, and not atheism, that can and does offer an effective resistance to totalitarian temptations.

Christianity accepts man's fallen condition, and therefore does not maintain that man can be completely remolded by the creation of a new society. This is not to say that improvements cannot he made, but rather that the perfection of man on earth is an unattainable ideal that men pursue only at their peril. It is only by being united with God upon death that one achieves true and everlasting happiness. For having abandoned the ideas of God and Heaven (and the humility that these beliefs instill), supporters of atheistic systems have tried to build, in effect, heavens on earth. The result has been a gruesome array of horrors perpetrated against the individual in the name of the glorious state.

Christianity offers a way of challenging these dangerous utopian tendencies. For Christianity allows for a special relationship between a man and his God, in which that man bows to none but his God.

JAMES B. ALLIS
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Christopher Hitchens erroneously states that Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) told Simon de Montfort, who led an army in a war against the Albigenses, to massacre all the heretics in their cities. "Kill them all. God will know his own," the pope is supposed to have said to Simon when the latter asked how to tell heretics from the faithful.

Actually, that bloodthirsty remark first made its appearance some sixty years later, attributed *not* to the pope but to a papal legate, Arnaud de Citeaux, who was with Simon at the siege of Béziers; it saw the light in a gossipy book, *Dialogus Magnus Visionum et Miraculorum*, written by a monk who was careful to introduce it with the words *Dixisse fertur* ("He *is asserted* to have said"). Furthermore, it is a fact that Pope Innocent III, in no law, document, or letter, ever demanded the infliction of the death penalty on the Albigensians or any other heretics of the time. Needless to say, all this is brought out not to excuse the cruelties and excesses of those years, but only to set the record straight.

REV. MSGR. A. V. MCLEES
St. Albans, N.Y.

Pundit

In his article "The Word Police" [*Harper's*, June], Hugh Kenner writes that "Collecting signs of the Last Days . . . is heavy work" for John Simon and Edwin Newman, but "a mere sideline for William Safire." This suggests that writing about the state of American English is a full-time occupation for Simon and for me.

My first book on language, *Strictly Speaking*, was published in 1974, and my second, *A Civil Tongue*, which Kenner cites, in 1976. I was a correspondent for NBC News at both times and had been since 1952. I still am.

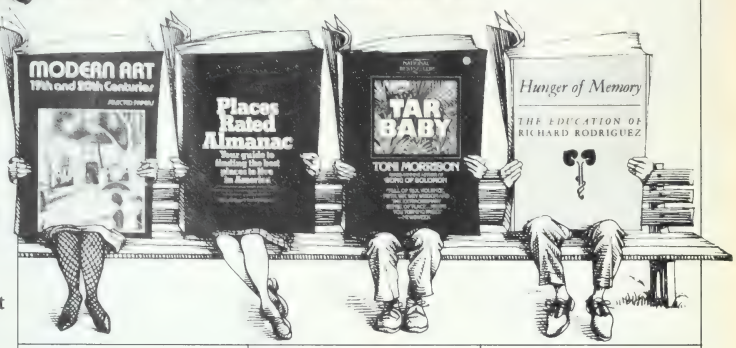
EDWIN NEWMAN
New York, N.Y.

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RICH DOCTORS, POOR NURSES

Testing our notions about a fair day's pay.

by David Osborne

EQUALITY of material reward is not our nation's strong suit. To pick a nice, clean statistic, the top 10 percent of all American workers take home some twenty times what their counterparts on the bottom rung earn. West Germany, Japan, and Sweden sport ratios closer to ten to one.

Until recently, many defenders of the American Way tended to be vaguely embarrassed by such comparisons. But in the current ideological climate, American inequality tends to be quite readily and bluntly justified as the product of a free economy, unencumbered by social-democratic meddling. Do executives at large corporations average over $500,000 a year while the average American worker falls short of $15,000? Well (our president might reassure us), that is simply the market working its magic—allocating scarce resources, rewarding merit, providing incentives for the players in our economic game to develop skills, assume responsibility, take risks, or endure unpleasant travail.

The economic justification for our material inequality is not just an appealing theory: it purports to reflect how things actually work. Does it? Certainly a good deal of casual evidence suggests that it does not. American executive salaries, for example, have kept on rising in recent years even as the economic performance of American firms has deteriorated. "Any similarity between rewards received and performances demonstrated often seems almost coincidental," concluded a recent *Fortune* magazine survey of 140 companies.

But top corporate executives are a tiny minority, a relatively small number of well-born, well-positioned, or even unscrupulous individuals. To better test the connection between individual prosperity and productivity, we might look at our third largest industry, accounting for a tenth of our GNP: the health-care business.

Average earnings in health care are similar to those in other industries, but, as health economist Victor Fuchs puts it, "the coefficient of variation, which measures the relative variance or inequality in earnings, is higher for health than for any other industry." In other words: doctors make lots of money, while nurses make little. And the question is, does this vast disparity between doctors' and nurses' earnings reflect the free market at work, rewarding risk, skill, and effort, or is it the result of less easily justifiable causes?

As OF 1980, there were approximately 450,000 physicians active in the United States, as compared with about 1.2 million registered nurses (RNs), 400,000 licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and almost a million nurses' aides, orderlies, and assistants. To get these terms straight, the aides and orderlies do the most menial work, while LPNs generally also do physical labor, such as

David Osborne, a writer living in Connecticut, is married to a doctor.

Sergio Larrain/Magnum Photos

changing sheets and helping patients out of bed. The RNs are in charge, with responsibility for executing doctors' orders, giving medications, and keeping track of patients' conditions. LPNs normally have only a year of training, while RNs average three years (many have bachelor's and master's degrees). The word "nurse" in the industry is used almost synonymously with RN—a custom I will follow.

According to the American Nurses Association, registered nurses earned an average of $19,381 per annum in January 1982. The figures varied from $27,865 for administrators down to $12,872 for RNs in physicians' offices (an interesting comment on doctor-nurse relationships). The most typical RNs —staff nurses in hospitals—averaged $18,331.

According to *Medical Economics*, a trade publication that publishes annual surveys of doctors' earnings, the median net income for a private, office-based physician in 1980 was $83,700. The one in eleven doctors who worked full time on the staff of a hospital made less—$61,590 in 1980—but he or she also garnered more benefits, such as retirement plans, malpractice insurance, and sometimes free offices in which to see private patients. Since physicians' earnings have recently been rising by about $5,000 a year, the office-based median is undoubtedly over $90,000 by now, and even that may be low. *Medical Economics*'s figures are provided by physicians themselves, who are considered notorious underreporters by the IRS.

Comparing doctors' and nurses' incomes is tricky, however. It is often said, on the basis of figures like those just cited, that doctors earn more than five times as much as nurses. But to generate a fair comparison one must make quite a few adjustments, all allowing room for bias. First, we are comparing an average for nurses with a median for physicians, the median being the point at which 50 percent make more and 50 percent less. According to *Medical Economics*, averages tend to run 20 percent higher than medians when it comes to physicians—placing the current average at around $110,000—because a minority of superrich doctors (heart surgeons and the like) skew the figures upward. The median may be more representative, as *Medical Economics* argues. Still, over a third of all office-based physicians made over $100,000 even in 1980, and by 1982 the typical doctor could expect many good years at well over the magic hundred grand. Splitting the difference, let us take $100,000 as a fair average for office-based physicians in 1982.

Doctors, however, work longer hours than nurses. *Medical Economics* says the median is sixty-one hours, a figure that could well be inflated, since part-time physicians are probably less likely to return the survey form than those with full practices (and other sources give lower figures). Full-time RNs work an average of forty-one hours a week, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But in the nurses' case the figure should probably be adjusted upward, since many nurses routinely put in unpaid overtime to complete their paperwork and make sure the next shift has adequate information on its patients.

Again using strictly seat-of-the-pants methodology, let us say doctors work sixty hours a week and nurses forty-five. So, for a fair comparison of earnings, we must knock 25 percent off the figure for physicians. Comparing $75,000 with $19,381—or $18,331, the most representative figure—we find physicians making roughly four times as much as nurses.

IF THE free market were working, the income differential between doctors and nurses would be just enough to assure a sufficient supply of the two professions. Reality, however, appears to conform with theory in neither case, for our nation faces not only a looming glut of doctors but an acute shortage of nurses.

Nursing publications estimate that 100,000 budgeted RN positions are going begging every year. The shortage is nationwide, affecting 88 percent of all medical institutions. The more desperate among them are paying bounty hunters, offering free cars and Hawaiian vacations, or providing housing, day care, and the like to lure nurses.

Poor pay is not the only reason for this shortage, apparently, and may not be even the primary reason. In most surveys nurses complain bitterly about their lack of authority and power within the medical hierarchy. Traditionally they have been treated as doctors' handmaidens, even being required to stand when a white-frocked physician entered the room. There are also problems of stress, overwork, irregular hours (the most acute shortages are normally on the night shift), and—perhaps equally important—an absence of significant channels for advancement.

If staff RNs want to advance in their profession, they cannot gradually be promoted to new levels within nursing. They must go into teaching or administration, fields with inherently limited job openings, neither of which has much to do with patient care, or go back to school and train for a year or two to become nurse-midwives, nurse-practitioners, or nurse-anesthetists. These specialties are still very small, their combined membership reaching only about 30,000 in 1980. For the average RN, there is little option but to tolerate the frustration

Ratio of average doctor's earnings to average male industrial worker's earnings during the 1970s, showing how most doctors are compensated.

United Kingdom	2.7	salary ↓
Sweden	3.6	
Ireland	3.6	
Denmark	3.8	
Belgium	5.3	fee-for-service ↓
United States	5.6	
West Germany	6.1	
Netherlands	6.4	
Italy	6.8	
France	7.0	

and boredom of an essentially dead-end job.

Such non-wage-related complaints don't explain away the nurse shortage. On the contrary; in a free market one of the functions of income differences is to compensate for such complaints by luring workers into unpleasant jobs with greater amounts of cash. Nurses' salaries have begun to rise in response to the shortage (50 percent in the last five years, from a 1977 average of only $13,000), but that has barely been enough to stay ahead of inflation and—more to the point—not enough to eliminate the shortage. In fact, according to the American Hospital Association, there are nearly 400,000 qualified registered nurses who have chosen not to work as nurses.

At the more affluent end of the health-care pay scale, the situation is exactly reversed. Doctors have gone from being too few in the 1960s to too many today. Thanks to an intense federal effort to finance an expansion of medical schools, the number of medical students more than doubled between 1960 and 1980. The total number of physicians rose from 259,000 to 447,000, with government predictions of 643,000 by the year 2000. According to the Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (GMENAC), a high-level body set up under HEW to study the problem, the nation will have a surplus of 70,000 doctors by 1990 and 145,000 by the turn of the century.

Already there is a glut in some areas and specialties, with doctors beginning to recruit patients away from their colleagues and many areas recommending that new physicians go elsewhere. The surplus exists primarily in the highest-paid specialties, such as surgery—not surprising, perhaps, until you realize that in the theoretical market (and in other professions like engineering), high pay is a response to labor *shortage*, while oversupply of a given type of specialist is supposed to bring pay scales down until the surplus disappears. By 1990, GMENAC predicts, serious physician shortages will remain only in three of the lowest-paid branches of the profession—child psychiatry, general psychiatry, and preventive medicine—plus emergency medicine, a new field with a high rate of "burnout."

Doctors' incomes are losing pace in areas of oversupply, such as New England and the Middle Atlantic states, because patient visits per doctor are declining. But doctors' *fees* have not slowed or fallen, as they are supposed to during a glut. And the doctor glut, like the nurse shortage, shows no sign of disappearing.

WHY is it that doctors can make so much, and nurses so little, despite the supply imbalance? As anyone unlucky enough to have stayed in the hospital knows, nurses do valuable work, just like doctors. They too are professionals, investing an average of three years in their education and training. They often compare themselves to teachers, physical therapists, and pharmacists, yet they are paid far less.

On the nurses' end of the inequality, some of the answers are obvious. Nursing has always been considered women's work—traditionally poorly paid and, until recently, associated with a captive labor market. Women simply did not have hundreds of other career options, and once they became nurses they could not easily switch to other industries. Others who work in hospitals—computer technicians, managers, electricians, accountants, even pharmacists and physical therapists—can easily find work outside hospitals. Most nurses cannot. In small and medium-sized communities there are often only one or two hospitals, and again, traditionally the average woman has not been able to move from city to city or state to state quite as easily as the average man. Unions in nursing have been weak, in sharp contrast to the immense power of the doctors' union, the American Medical Association.

After a brief period when Medicare and Medicaid money set hospitals awash in federal funds, nurses' wages were depressed during the 1970s as pressure mounted on hospitals to contain soaring costs. Nurses' salaries account for at least 25 percent of hospital costs. Unable to control other expenses, such as energy, supplies, and salaries of physicians, hospitals tried assiduously to keep the lid on in the only place they could: nurses' wages.

Trying to explain doctors' incomes is a bit more puzzling. There are three common justifications for incomes in the doctors' range. First, they might be necessary to entice people into taking socially necessary risks. But this argument, while it may apply to oil drilling or starting silicon-chip factories, will not wash for medicine. It is not easy to get into medical school, but once there, a budding young doctor has as close to a sure thing as our society offers. Few people flunk out of med school these days, and even if one despises patients or faints at the sight of blood, one can always go into radiology or pathology and pull down an easy $100,000 a year. Risk is all but eliminated from the picture.

High salaries are also justified as compensation for bearing heavy responsibilities. This argument clearly has some validity when applied to physicians. Doctors do make life-and-death decisions, and surely that calls for some incentive. But nurses also bear a burden of responsibility. Does the difference really justify a four-to-one income ratio? The argument seems to fall flat when one realizes that two of the highest-paid medical specialties are those with the least responsibility for patients. They are radiology (in which one makes diagnoses for other doctors' patients with X rays, ultrasound, CAT scanners, and the like) and pathology (in which one examines cell specimens in a laboratory). Both specialties have median incomes well above those of even surgeons and obstetricians.

Finally, there is the justification you will most often hear from doctors themselves: the long and expensive period of education and

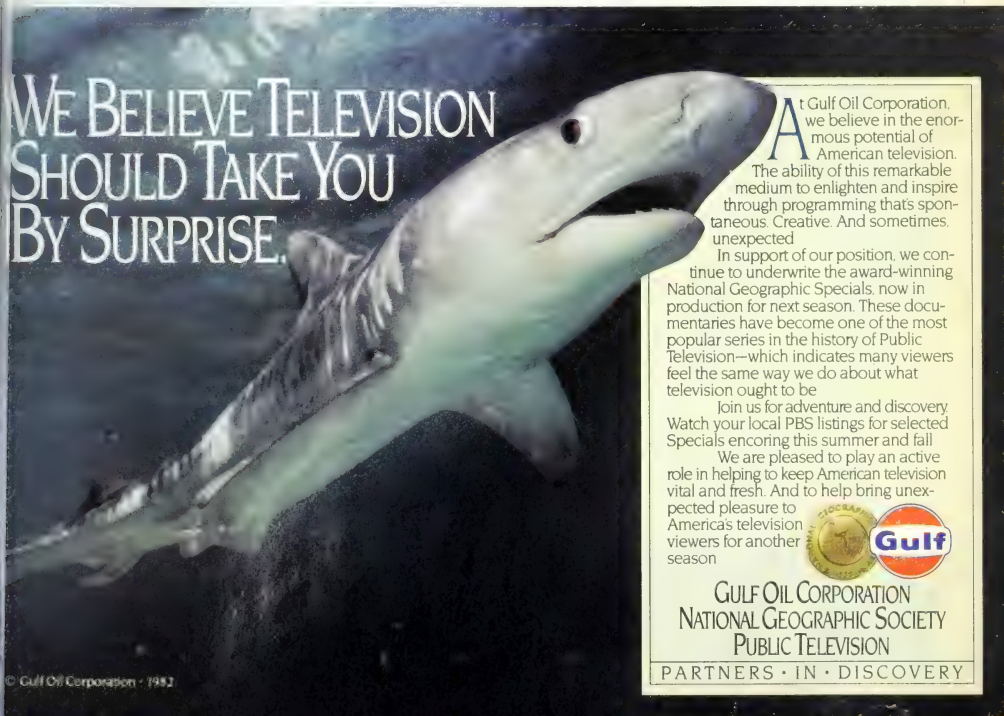
training necessary to enter medicine. Most American doctors have put in eight hard years of higher education, followed by three to five years of residency. In recent years most have racked up $20,000, $30,000, or even $50,000 in debts, depending on family finances and tuition levels. For most aspiring doctors, deferred gratification has become a way of life, often well into their thirties.

Having witnessed my own wife going through this process, I can testify that it has a tremendous impact. Students decide on medical school, in my experience, with little thought of financial reward. At age twenty there are many quicker, easier paths to wealth, including law school and business school. The medical initiation process—twelve years of grueling eighty-hour weeks, in which one grubs around in everything from cankers to cadavers—is simply too long to embark on for mercenary reasons. The motives of premeds certainly run the gamut—from longing for security and status to true fascination with medicine—but big money is rarely among them.

By the end of medical school, however, the picture has changed. Exhausted, deeply in debt, approaching their thirties, the new M.D.s have had it with deferred gratification. Visions of BMWs and Caribbean vacations dance in their heads. They want it bad, and most believe they deserve it. Unfortunately, they know the worst is yet to come. Depending on their specialty, they face three, four, or five years of sheer exhaustion, working 100 hours per week, doing without sleep every third night, and giving up any hope of a social life—all for four or five dollars an hour.

Looked at subjectively, then, and given the typical doctor's famine-feast cycle of reward, the problem may be understandable. By objective economic standards, however, it appears that doctors cash in to an extent hardly justified by any economic calculation. Doctors' debts seem staggering, until one realizes that nurses have debts left over from their training, too, and that the typical medical student's debts average out to less than $1,000 a year more than a typical nurse's, over an entire career. In fact, if you view medical school as an investment (of tuition and forgone earnings) by doctors in themselves, with the payoff being the difference between an M.D.'s and an ordinary college graduate's income, then the rate of return on that investment (judged by one 1970 study to be 22 percent) is roughly double the return on funds spent for a college education. In other words, even taking into account all the debts and deferred gratification, the doctors' implicit bargain turns out to be a very lucrative deal.

NEITHER supply, demand, risk, responsibility, training, nor deferred gratification seems to account for the huge disparity between doctors' and nurses' incomes. What does? To answer that question we must look to forces that have nothing to do with the classic free market.



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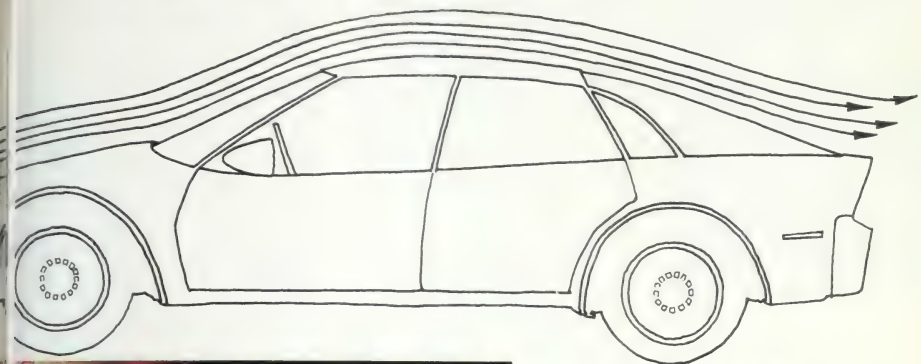
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The fact is, a working free market simply does not exist in the health-care sector (as the persistence of glut and shortage itself suggests). The most obvious nonmarket force is the guildlike power of the American Medical Association. From the 1930s through the 1960s, the AMA deliberately fought to limit the number of physicians practicing in the U.S. During the 1930s this was accomplished by forcing medical schools to reduce their ranks. After World War II it was done by fighting federal aid to medical education. As the AMA warned of a coming physician surplus, the ratio of doctors to the overall population actually *fell* between 1950 and 1960.

During this entire period, doctors' incomes rose rapidly. In 1929 they were in the same league with those of lawyers and dentists, and in 1945 they were three times as high as nurses' salaries (per year, not per hour). Today physicians make more than five times what nurses make annually, and twice what lawyers and dentists average.

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The AMA also fought hard to push out its competition at the state and county levels: osteopaths, chiropractors, midwives, and even health maintenance organizations (HMOs), whose patients pay a set monthly fee for all their medical care. Even today the association is working in state legislatures and local hospitals to keep nurse-practitioners, nurse-midwives, and physicians' assistants from performing certain routine procedures and prescribing medicine. As a result, we have few alternatives to seeing an M.D. when we are ill.

Luckily for doctors, by the time the AMA-created shortage had become so acute that Washington had to do something about it, another factor was already at work to ensure steadily rising incomes. This was the rapid growth of third-party payments: health insurance, Medicare (for the elderly), and Medicaid (for the poor). Private insurance became commonplace between 1945 and 1965, while the federal programs came on line in 1966. Today 90 percent of Americans have some form of coverage, and almost two thirds of all physicians' services are paid for by third parties, most of which fix payments to doctors in accordance with their customary fees.

This system has had predictable and well-known effects. Because the customer—the patient—is rarely paying for his own medical services (the way he would pay for a toaster or new car), he has little incentive to hold down the cost of his own treatment. With most patients insured, doctors can charge them top-drawer rates, or perform procedures of questionable necessity, without worrying about losing business, the way other sellers do.

Even if everyone did pay for his own medical care, "the market" would not work to hold down doctors' fees as it does in other industries. Several of the ordinary conditions that facilitate rational consumer choice simply do not exist in health care. First, most patients are ill when the time comes to choose what health care to buy, and they are not inclined to shop around or question a doctor's judgment. Nor are they likely to have the information necessary to question it. As laymen, without the slightest idea of what an intravenous pyelogram is (much less whether they need it), they tend to let the white-coated experts make the decisions. The typical medical consumer is like the shopper who goes to a clothing store in desperation, states the problem ("I need a dress for the prom"), and lets the sales clerk decide what she should buy and at what price.

MEDICAL institutions do not make it easy for consumers to shop for lower prices. You don't find hospitals giving sales on nose jobs or gall-bladder operations. The AMA ban on doctor advertising (which the Federal Trade Commission has ruled illegal, but which the AMA is fighting to preserve in the courts) effectively inhibits any consumer impulse to go comparison shopping. But the point is that even if these hurdles were removed, the nature and timing of medical decisions would make it difficult for the free-market forces to set fees (and hence incomes) in this industry.

The few exceptions illustrate the rule. Consider eyeglasses and drugs —items that lend themselves to price shopping, which are not always purchased when one is ill, which are not normally covered by insurance, and which, in the case of eyeglasses, are subject to price advertising. Neither has followed hospital and physician services up the price escalator. While the total amount spent on hospital and physician services almost doubled between 1972 and 1977, the amount spent on drugs increased by only a third, while that spent on eyeglasses barely rose at all.

Conventional market forces are so weak in medicine, in fact, that in areas where there are too many physicians and where competition should lower fees, just the opposite happens. Economists have developed a theory to explain this. Called the "target-income hypothesis," it observes that when faced with fewer

patients per physician, doctors raise fees and/or perform more services per patient—enough to bring their incomes up to their personal "targets" and finance the comfortable lives they've come to expect. Boston has six times as many doctors per capita as northeast Arkansas, for example, but routine specialist charges and Medicare payments per patient are 70 percent higher in Boston. Research from Canada and West Germany, as well as the U.S., shows that doctors have reacted to wage and price controls by performing more services per patient, thus evading the intent of the controls.

LET US briefly indulge the suspicion that society would be better off if doctors made less money and nurses more (particularly in light of the current supply imbalance between the two professions). To risk proposing concrete figures, suppose we wanted nurses to make $30,000 a year and doctors to make merely twice that. How might it be done?

The most desirable way to raise nurses' incomes would be to increase the number of nurse-practitioners and nurse-midwives. Nurses might be encouraged to set up their own practices, allowed to receive third-party payments, and generally treated more like general practitioners. This would require increased training, which would be built more directly into the nursing career ladder so that RNs could make at least partial progress toward nurse-practitioner status while continuing their work—and so that nurses wouldn't simply follow the lead of doctors by establishing credential barriers against those LPNs and assistants below them in the health hierarchy. The doctors, of course, are not about to cede any of their territory without a fight, particularly with a glut of physicians staring them in the face. But the benefits certainly justify fighting back. For nurses they include a realistic chance of advancement and financial reward; for consumers, a chance to have many services that now must be performed by high-priced doctors performed by

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To balance the institutional power of the hospitals where most of them work, nurses also need stronger unions. This is a step some might fear, knowing the destructive effect of public-sector strikes and the tendency of many unions to use their power to protect incompetents and enforce rigid work rules. But even hospital workers can strike responsibly (by not striking in intensive care units, for example). As for protecting incompetents, it is typically those unions with no power to strike over wages, such as many government-employee unions, that spend their greatest efforts attempting to serve their members by erecting rigid barriers against discipline or dismissal.

THERE are several strategies for keeping physicians' salaries down (which would, in turn, keep overall medical costs down, since physicians currently receive a fifth of all money spent on health care). First are steps to restore as free a market as possible, such as promoting advertising to spur price competition among doctors, and breaking down the guild practices that restrict lower-cost, non-M.D. competitors. Second, reform of medical education and training to make it less expensive and grueling, and perhaps shorter, would surely mute the subsequent greed of graduates. Instead of making students borrow $50,000 for tuition alone, why not simply tax them a flat, fixed percentage of their income after graduation (so those with the highest future incomes would pay the most)? The percentage could be set to raise the same amount of money as the current system, but the psychological impact would be very different. Similarly, it is surely a false economy to make residents work for four dollars an hour if that only fuels their desire to cash in big later.

A more important step would be to reduce directly doctors' fees in the vast majority of cases where some form of insurance is involved. The strategy currently favored by the Reagan administration is to increase the share paid out-of-pocket by consumers, to make them more sensitive to price. But, as discussed above, the very nature of medical care discourages effective price shopping; if the consumer's share were made large enough to force price consciousness, it would probably be so large as to defeat the very purpose of insurance.

A better strategy would be to take more advantage of the institutional power of large insurers. For example, since Medicare and Medicaid provide 21 percent of all physicians' fees, the government can wield a certain amount of influence in forcing prices down. Some 70 or 80 percent of all doctors currently accept Medicare and/or Medicaid patients. If they were confronted with lower reimbursement levels and banned from billing patients for additional amounts (which many Medicare doctors now do), some would flatly refuse to take government-insured cases. But many would have no choice but to accept. The medical profession would scream about "socialized medicine," but in fact the government would be doing nothing more than acting as an intelligent capitalist—paying as little as possible for the services it buys. After all, when the government buys steel and concrete for a road we expect it to shop for the best price. Why not when it buys medical care?

Private insurers and large employers should be encouraged, or required, to do the same thing. The U.S. today is the only developed Western nation in which private insurance reimbursement levels are not limited in some way by the government.

Experience in other countries shows that the most effective arrangement is a united organization of all private and government insurers to negotiate fee schedules with the doctors so they cannot play one insurer off against another. Unfortunately, however, overseas experience also shows that defeating the organized power of doctors requires extraordinary political will and strength. Charles de Gaulle had to resort to emergency powers to bring French doctors into line in 1960. Needless to say, this sort of political will has not been shown by the Reagan administration, which has proposed only a feeble 2 percent cutback in reimbursement rates for Medicare payments to hospitals —but not to doctors.

Finally, health-care reform must address the fee-for-service concept itself. The clearest lesson to be drawn from the rest of the world's health-care experience is that the way to restrain physicians' incomes is to get them off fee-for-service and onto straight salaries. In those west European nations where all or many physicians were on salary during the 1970s—Great Britain, Sweden, Ireland, and Denmark—the ratio of physicians' total incomes to those of male industrial workers was below four to one. Nations with fee-for-service arrangements (including the U.S.) had ratios of 5.3 and up, despite the fact that most had national health insurance, in which the government bargained over fee schedules. The reason is already familiar: when doctors can bill for each service performed, they can simply bill for more services, even when their fees are controlled. When they are on salary, they have no such option.

In the U.S., only 10 percent of patient-care physicians (excluding residents) receive a salary. Obviously, the quickest way to change that would be through a national health-care system in which all doctors work for the government. This is the British model, which has produced the lowest physician-to-industrial-worker income ratio in western Europe, 2.7 to one.

An arrangement more in keeping with the spirit of American capitalism is the health maintenance organization (HMO). HMOs typically put doctors on salary. Moreover, because they charge consumers only a flat monthly fee for all their medical needs, they allow consumers to price-shop, and to do their shopping when they are well rather than sick. HMOs offer customers the benefits of health insurance without its cost-inflating disadvantages. Forced to compete for

customers, HMOs must keep the quality of care up while minimizing unnecessary services in order to keep costs down.

HMOs could even provide an old-fashioned free-market way for doctors to get rich—not by charging high fees, or performing unnecessary services, but by collectively (or even singly) owning the HMOs for which they worked. Such doctor-owners would get rich the same way other businessmen (ideally) get rich—if their businesses attracted customers by providing the right combination of quality and cost, and advertised those virtues effectively. The doctor-owners who started an HMO would be taking a risk, just like entrepreneurs in other industries—and these risks, and the skilled work necessary to overcome them, are precisely what would justify the hefty incomes they'd get if they succeeded. In the best of all possible worlds, HMOs might even be owned collectively by the doctors, nurses, and others who staffed them, so everyone could get rich, or relatively so.

The HMO scenario is appealing, particularly to economists, because it holds out the possibility of recapturing some of the competitive benefits of the marketplace. But its flaw is obvious: as long as HMOs must compete for doctors with the lure of unrestricted private fees, economic incentives will pull the best doctors toward private practice and stigmatize HMOs as second-rate health care. This is why the government must simultaneously act vigorously to keep private physicians' fees under control by limiting third-party payments.

To the current administration, of course, any mention of using the government to limit doctors' fees—even if only through the government's own influence as a health-care insurer—smacks of tampering with the free market. But in medicine there is no free market, and in important respects there never can be. The sooner the government recognizes that fact, the sooner there will be fewer overpaid doctors and a sufficient number of adequately paid nurses. And the sooner we can all afford to get sick again. ■

BAGGAGE



Edward Koren

THE $310 MILLION PARANOIA SUBSIDY

by Patrick Brogan

All those X-ray machines are a waste of money.

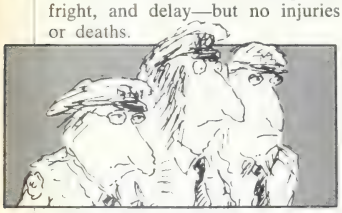
BY NOW, we are all used to the indignity of being searched at airports. Since 1972, when President Nixon ordered the Federal Aviation Authority's security program, our bags have gone through one machine, our bodies through another, while bored "screeners" glance at images of our laundry or nag us about keys in our pockets. Airport security has become just another part of the disagreeable pattern of late-twentieth-century living, to be endured as we do unopenable aspirin bottles or garbage in the streets.

But is it necessary, or even effective? Last year, at a cost of $260 million, 15,000 security personnel and police at 379 American airports foiled eight would-be hijackers. Six

Patrick Brogan, former Washington correspondent of The Times *(London), is a freelance journalist living in New York.*

were picked up because of odd behavior, such as attacking ticket clerks; another one because of a tipoff. Only one of the eight was caught by the formidable apparatus of X-ray machines and guards. He had concealed a gun inside a radio, and was apprehended only because he went through the checkpoint twice. He was stopped the second time.

Meanwhile, seven hijacking incidents occurred last year (twenty-one in 1980 and eleven the year before), despite the security system. Two involved the use of flammable liquids. (A Molotov cocktail is more dangerous than a hand grenade on an aircraft; 285 passengers on a Saudi plane were killed in Riyadh when it appears one of them lit a butane stove to make tea.) In four other cases, hijackers claimed to have flammables or explosives but turned out to be bluffing. In the only incident involving a gun, a man brushed past the security system and brandished the weapon on the plane before being wrestled to the ground. One other hijacking was aborted on the ground, and the remaining five were concluded after some expense, fright, and delay—but no injuries or deaths.



The FAA, of course, is proud of its security program, not least because it conforms to the principles of Reaganomics: the user pays. Airports and airlines are in charge of their own security, and foot the FAA's bills, but they pass on the entire cost to the passengers at a rate of about eighty cents a ticket. With 850,000 people flying every day in the United States, that comes to $700,000 a day. To each passenger, that extra eighty cents spent on airport security is quite invisible, like the additional cost of the "free" meals served in flight. So the FAA can provide the finest security that money can buy without having to worry too much about the price tag.

Indeed, the FAA has been experimenting with ever newer, better, and doubtless more expensive methods of detecting weapons and explosives, including the use of computers and gerbils. True, in its latest report to Congress, the FAA sadly concluded that trained animals "could not meet FAA requirements with regard to sensitivity to the odors involved, and ability to select out the specific odors of interest." Stupid gerbils. And eight years of trying to program a computer to analyze X rays of baggage have produced results that were "somewhat less than anticipated." Stupid machines.

Still, progress is being made with thermal neutron activators, which produce a measurable nuclear reaction in concealed explosives. Those of us who did not know that dynamite can produce a distinguishable nuclear reaction in the first place may be reassured that a technique for detecting one is considered suitable for use on air cargo. The FAA also sees hope in nuclear magnetic-resonance devices (which subject baggage to "magnetic and pulsed radio frequency fields" to which explosives will respond) and in walk-by bomb detectors (which sense the vapor given off by explosives).

All this to stop half a dozen hijackings a year and to deter an incalculable number of attempts. The existing system of 10,000 "screeners," 5,000 law-enforcement officers, 774 X-ray machines, and 1,311 "weapons detection devices" does, of course, catch other kinds of law breakers. A couple of hundred drug offenders and about 1,500 illegal aliens are stopped every year, although there is a constitutional problem involved in detecting them. Airport security personnel are not permitted to search people merely on the suspicion that they are smuggling drugs or are illegal aliens; before passengers can be frisked, they must be assured that they have been mistaken for hijackers. And about 2,000 guns are uncovered annually (2,255 in 1981, 2,022 the year before, 2,161 in 1979), about half of them in the hands of criminals going about their business, about half belonging to gun owners unwilling to let their cannons out of their sight. (The first kind of offenders, 1,187 last year, are arrested; the second are not.)

BUT weapons can get through nonetheless. Some are simply overlooked; imagine being one of those 10,000 "screeners" staring at X-rayed baggage, day in and day out. Besides, a gun can be broken down into unrecognizable parts and reassembled past the checkpoint. A hand grenade can be hidden in an aerosol shaving-cream can or a photographer's lens case. The ingredients of a Molotov cocktail can be carried on quite openly; any bottle of, say, duty-free liquor or perfume can be emptied and refilled with gasoline. And the possibilities for bluffing should not be forgotten; once on board, anyone could claim that a bottle of water was really a Molotov cocktail, or that a paper bag contained a bomb. Who would stop to ask how he got it past security? (Recall those four bluffers last year.)

Indeed, most American hijackers fall into the category of what the FAA calls "inadequate personalities," people who want to draw attention to themselves or to escape their problems—and who usually carry fake weapons or bombs and surrender relatively easily. True, there are some genuine psychotics, but fortunately not too many recently. There is also the category of criminals trying to escape, but there aren't too many of them these days either, since Castro would arrest them as soon as they got to Havana and then ship them back—and where else besides Cuba could a petty American criminal go? Finally, there are the Cubans exiled in 1980 who now want to return home, but their number will surely diminish as the refugees become integrated into American society.

There are, to be sure, exceptions to these categories, such as the Serbian who hijacked a New York–Chicago flight in 1979,

made various political demands to the Yugoslav and American governments, and crossed the Atlantic before being induced to surrender. And the most remarkable case was D. B. Cooper, the hijacker who bailed out over Washington with a $200,000 ransom he had extorted from Northwest Airlines. The money was found a decade later, rotting in a forest; the man probably died.

The real problem is the terrorist —the PLO or Red Brigades member —for whom American airport security is no deterrent at all. All it takes is planning, nerve, and concerted action. A three-man team might march purposefully through a checkpoint, disguised as a flight crew and carrying bombs in their flight bags. Or teamwork might be used to distract the security agents: Terrorist Number One might get into a violent argument with the guards, ask for pen and paper to take down their names, and demand to see their supervisor, while Terrorist Number Two waltzes through the gate. In any case, weapons could easily be smuggled aboard—in the caterer's food containers, for example, which are never searched. Probably the main deterrent to professionals is the random check, but the PLO, if it opened an American front, would not be deterred for long.

What happens when a hijacker makes it on board? Then the really serious people take over. After a frightened stewardess tells the pilot that a hijacking is under way, he pushes an alarm button, and a signal flashes on the radar screen of the air controller. The crisis center at the FAA in Washington is alerted, and the experts from the FBI gather. Negotiations begin. The technique usually employed with amateurs and obvious loonies is to soothe and comfort them and let them fly to Havana if they really want to—all the while using sweet reasonableness to get them to release the passengers.

The hijacker always wants something, and the negotiators try to persuade him that his initial demands are excessive and that he should settle for something less. One man


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started out asking for a million dollars and a flight out of the country; he settled for a hamburger and a rental car. Others want to see the president and settle for the FBI case officer. The agents are well trained in dealing with such situations, as their success shows.

Only in extreme cases is a plane rushed by armed agents—if passengers are being killed, for example. But "inadequate personalities" and homesick Cubans do not kill people. Americans have never had to storm an airliner, as the Israelis, French, Germans, and Egyptians have. And if the present security system were relaxed, there is no reason to think that things would change for the worse. The sophisticated FAA crisis techniques for dealing with hijackings when they actually happen are a far cheaper and more effective way of protecting passengers. All that $310 million worth of equipment and personnel seems, at best, to be designed to deter the nuts and the homesick and the wishful-thinking—not the hardened terrorist.

If you want to see real security measures, take a flight on El Al, Turkish Airlines, or Yugoslav Airlines. These three are under perpetual threat from terrorists and don't waste time with high-tech gimmicks. All passengers on Turkish Airlines are searched physically, and unsympathetic soldiers go through all the hand luggage with great thoroughness. Guards also see the bags into the cargo hold, ensuring that no stray suitcase with a bomb is smuggled through. El Al is even more extreme. Passengers are screened in the airline's separate departure lounge; everyone is not only searched but interrogated ("Why do you want to go to Israel?"), often in embarrassingly personal terms ("Are you a homosexual?"). Carry-on luggage is not X-rayed but inspected by hand; baggage headed for the hold is X-rayed and is subjected to spot searches. And there are armed guards on every flight. The closest Americans come to this sort of all-embracing security is at Miami airport and at a few others serving communities with large Cuban populations. Bottles of perfume are opened, cans of shaving cream checked, all in case a passenger has a fantasy of returning to Havana.

There is obviously no point in inflicting such indignities on all passengers on all airlines. The unfortunate Israelis, Turks, and Yugoslavs have to put up with them because of local problems. The rest of us must endure lesser indignities and less inconvenience—but how much is too much, and how little enough?

Our costly and cumbersome apparatus of X-ray machines and guards was a response to the great wave of hijackings, here and abroad, during the late Sixties and early Seventies. It seemed that every week some melancholy Cuban was looking for a way back to Havana, or some escaped convict choosing Castro's jails over ours. At the same time, international terrorists, the PLO in particular, decided on hijacking as a favorite tactic.

Politically motivated hijacking continues apace. There are one or two every month, and they have resulted in 290 deaths over the past four years. But the PLO's mass hijacking of airliners to Jordan in 1970 led to the suppression of the organization there (in "Black September"), and the PLO seems to have abandoned hijacking after Entebbe. Israeli commandos, Castro's decision to return hijackers, changing fashions in terrorism—all these seem to have had more impact on the rate of hijacking than have electronic security measures.

But we're probably stuck with the current system. If the government had the courage to scrap it, there would undoubtedly be an initial rise in the number of incidents, and the public, assuming a cause-and-effect relation, would demand that it be reinstituted immediately. There is an American tendency to overinsure, to take precautions against one-in-a-thousand dangers, and to recompense inordinately those who suffer them. Recently a woman filed a lawsuit because she had slipped into a grave while attending a funeral; after being stuck for half an hour looking up at a coffin suspended overhead, she suffered nightmares, for which the court awarded her $400,000 in damages.

In no other country would she have been given the time of day for anything so ridiculous. Nowhere else have personal irresponsibility and the refusal to accept the unavoidable risks of life become so institutionalized that lawyers get their 30 percent regardless, and insurance pays for everything. Likewise with airport security, a worthy idea now grotesquely out of hand but not capable of being simply abandoned. The first planeload of indignant passengers hijacked for a few hours would, after being rescued efficiently, sue the airports, airlines, and FAA for hundreds of millions of dollars. Though it works mainly to deter "inadequate personalities," the present apparatus is needed most of all to keep the rest of the passengers from being frightened.

But this kind of prevention is far more costly and far less effective than the cure of allowing the FBI to go about its business of persuading hijackers to surrender. Requiring all airports to have expensive machinery and personnel is like mandating that all subway systems be adapted, at a cost of billions, to people in wheelchairs. Since it would be far cheaper to transport the handicapped in taxis, wherever they want, whenever they want, it's clear that the wrong question was asked—how to enable the handicapped to use the subways, instead of how best to move them around. Similarly, after the wave of hijackings a decade ago, the wrong question was asked: how do we stop hijackings? Since the answer was that we can't, the only thing to do was to spend a great deal of money going through the motions, while trying to deter most potential hijackers. Instead, the question should have been: how do we cope with the few inevitable hijackings? The answer would not have been thermal neutron activators or trained gerbils. It would have been to play it cool and rely on the experts in the FAA's crisis center. ■



THE GOSSIP'S CODE

by Diana McLellan

Rule 2: get it right—or else liven it up.

A YEAR or so ago, United Technologies published an advertisement with a very high moral tone in the *Wall Street Journal*. The headline promised to describe THE SNAKE THAT POISONS EVERYBODY. The copy elaborated: "It topples governments, wrecks marriages, ruins careers, busts reputations, causes heartaches, nightmares, indigestion, spawns suspicion, generates grief, dispatches innocent people to cry in their pillows. Even its name hisses. It's called gossip. Office gossip. Shop gossip. Party gossip. It makes headlines and headaches. Before you repeat a story, ask yourself: Is it true? Is it fair? Is it necessary? If not, shut up."

Well! What a rude, untrue, unfair, unnecessary little piece of propaganda. Immediately, in Washington, a city universally envied for the quality, variety, and profusion of its gossip, the question sprang to everybody's lips: "What on earth do you suppose United Technologies has been getting up to?"

IF HELL, as somebody once said, is a place where everyone is compelled to mind his own business, Washington is very close to heaven. The wheels of the city are greased with gossip. And yet, and yet. In the great cathedral of Serious American Journalism, the Washington gossip writer must skulk in a dank nook somewhere between the candle ends and the confessional. In the quiet chapel of Polite Society, he perches self-consciously in the back pew. But purveyors of gossip in the nation's capital—and I am unrepentantly one of them—know that there are *classes* of gossip. Just as you might aspire to be a compassionate butcher, a merry mortician, a left-wing slumlord, or an honest lawyer, you can hope to become what is known as a coded gossip.

A coded gossip must never be confused with a low-minded snooper, unless absolutely necessary. He is like a bespoke tailor, or a bonded bailiff. He has sworn to follow the code as long as his vocal cords hold out.

And in Washington, a town where press releases and on-the-record briefings have supplanted most normal forms of discourse, the gossip's mission is a lofty one—to preserve the humble human voice.

As a public service, representatives of this sturdy profession may elect to communicate aspects of the code—on this occasion, to a selected handful of *Harper's* readers, those who can be trusted to revere its traditions and uphold its lore. (The others are all getting Al Haig's diary this month. Honestly, you wouldn't have liked it much.)

Close the door, please. If you are riding public transportation, be sure nobody is peeking over your shoulder. If you are in your bathtub, hum along to allay suspicion. Now swear you won't tell a living soul, for here, making their first appearance in print, are some finer points of the code.

First, the names. For God's sake, try to get the names right, more or less.

IT IS, after all, discouraging to pass on a tidbit of gossip and discover that the person to whom you are gossiping is the one the tidbit is really about. This has happened on several occasions

Diana McLellan writes "The Ear," a gossip column that appears four days a week in the Washington Post. *Her new book,* Ear on Washington, *was published this summer by Arbor House.*

Keith Bendis

to an acquaintance of mine whose congressman husband is "bad at names." If you are bad at names, take up fly fishing, like Jimmy Carter.

And get the *right* right name. So many people one gossips about come in duplicate these days, particularly in Washington. At least two active Marilyn Lewises—one the wife of the transportation secretary, and the other the owner of the Hamburger Hamlets—are currently driving the capital mad. There are two Paul Costellos—one from the Carter and one from the Reagan White House. Two Larry Kings prowl the city—the hairy Texan who wrote *Best Little Whorehouse* and the lean late-night talk-show host. There seem to be several dozen John Gardners, including an author, a Common Causer, and an Arizona tennis pro popular among Washington politicians—but most people don't bother gossiping about any of them anymore.

Complicated names are hard to gossip about, but may pay off in the long run. Exiting senator S. I. Hayakawa, during his first three months in office, received letters addressed to George, Sidney, and Sessui Hayakawa, Sen. I. Hiawatha, Senator Higher Power, Mr. I. Kawa, and S & H Highakua. The Senate barber shop listed him as F. I. Kayawawa.

Yet in the fullness of time gossips overcame this problem, and made him one of the most gossiped-about politicians in the city. Don't be too easily discouraged.

Second, try to get the story right. Or, failing that, liven it up.

THE latter part of this maxim applies, *naturellement*, only to the gossip in private practice, compared with whom the modern *professional* gossip is at a distinct disadvantage. The finest fruit of his art, which in a more temperate climate would ripen naturally into juicy print, is often frostbitten before it has a chance to plumpen and sweeten. Paranoid lawyers and litigious fidgets charge into the gossip grove waving searchlights and axes—and onto the compost heap she goes.

An excellent piece of gossip that made the rounds for about eight years concerned Tricia Nixon Cox, as the president's married daughter. Her husband, Eddie, was a young lawyer in New York. Tricia did not cook. Regularly, it was whispered, dinner was flown in from the White House kitchen via Air Force One by the complaisant pilots of Andrews Air Force Base.

The best gossip concerned the day Tricia decided to give a party. As usual, she called the White House with her request. It was a busy time. State guests were in town; there was to be a White House dinner that night. Still, according to the gossip, a cook took time out, carefully catered Tricia's affair, and saw that the comestibles were launched on their usual route. Dinner arrived intact, but Tricia decided something was missing. She would have liked her favorite Key lime pie for dessert. She called back, to a kitchen still in the throes of elaborate dinner preparations. Would they please send along a couple of Key lime pies? And the second plane of the day reportedly winged its way from Andrews Air Force Base.

Several people who had worked for the Nixons recalled "something of the sort." A half dozen reporters had chewed over the Key lime pie saga in one form or another; two swore they had seen it in print. The very words "Key lime pie" were enough to brighten a gloomy day for some old-timers. I wished to nail down details of this elderly but elegant item for my book, and embarked on a flurry of phone calls. Responses were general and positive, but devoid of specifics. Finally, in despair, I called Bill Gully, the Nixons' White House military affairs office chief and keeper of the perks. Bill had logged every single flight of Air Force One and its entire cargo, without exception. He was not at all shy, having just written, with Mary E. Reese, a magnificent exposé of his own, *Breaking Cover*.

Yes, he said, some tangential scraps were true. Fina, the Nixons' cook, had been flown to New York on Air Force One to produce Tricia's Thanksgiving dinner. Yes, Tricia had toted huge bags of White House doughnuts with her regularly on her New York flights, to fill the breakfast gap chez Cox. But the tasty tale with which I wished to launch a chapter was not true. From this corner the cry goes out, "Can the Key lime story!"

You may be shocked to hear that some rumors are slaughtered in the womb when they are subjected to that cruel process called, by professionals, "checking the buggers out," a horrible concession to modernism. One such rumor invaded the city in March 1981: George Bush, the vice president, had been "nicked" by a bullet, either from the gun of an assailant or from that of his own secret-service man, while leaving the Capitol Hill townhouse of a toothsome young woman just before dawn.

One version of this pervasive tale even appeared in the top secret Time, Inc. executive newsletter. (This contains the crème de la crème of worldwide gossip. It is secretly circulated to give Time executives —*only*—the inside poop deemed too racy for mere readers.)

The story was everywhere. You could not slip into a Capitol Hill bar for a quiet gossip or wink at a headwaiter without the tale being laid out before you for inspection like a live lobster. In a frenzy of investigation, the *Washington Post* and *Star*, Jack Anderson, CBS, NBC, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, and the very best gossip columnists aimed their crack teams at this choice scrap.

Two *Washington Post* reporters —one of whom, incidentally, was Janet Cooke—doggedly tracked it to its source, an artist on Capitol Hill who believed she had heard a city cop mention it when he answered the call to a traffic accident.

The officer, cornered, protested with vigor: "I don't know anything about it. I didn't say it and I didn't hear it. I don't know what you're talking about." And that was the end of that.

Remember that gossip is no longer gossip when its subject is confronted.

THE modern newspaper gossip must actually track the gossipee, or the gossipee's agent or spokesman, to his lair and ask him to confirm or deny a piece of gossip that is circulating about him. For a gossip of delicacy, this face-to-face confrontation is unsettling. Throughout human history, the preferred position for gossip has been not missionary style but behind its object's back.

Besides, the encounter does you no good at all, as the following sample dialogues, reproduced verbatim, will show.

"Um, we understand that there are full-color photographs of Senator Kennedy taking, um, a walk in the nude along a public stretch of Palm Beach."

"What? That's completely insane."

"Well, they are circulating in Europe."

"Nobody here has heard anything about them. You must be wrong."

"Um, well, look. Actually, we have a copy here from a German magazine. It certainly looks very much like the senator, as far as we can tell. Has, uh, has he seen them? Has anybody over there seen them, and, um, what does the senator think about them?"

"Sorry. That is the type of so-called journalism that the senator just doesn't comment on."

Or: "We hear from excellent sources close to both of them that Senator Warner and Miss Taylor are, well, contemplating a separation."

"Ha, ha, ha, who's saying that? It's the funniest thing I've ever heard. What a scream, Oh, *won't* they both laugh when they hear it!"

A lesson, here, for the gossip in private practice. Remember that grinding your happy harvest between the twin millstones of Truth and Responsibility only turns it into News. It becomes pasty fare that you're *supposed* to chew on, instead of something tasty that you're not.

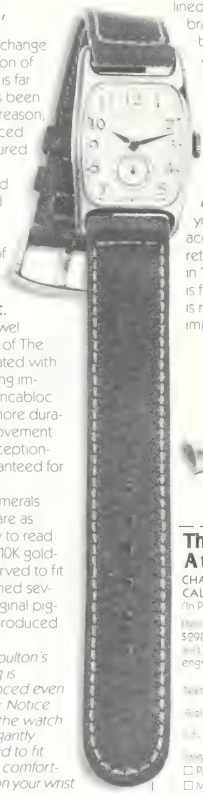
Hamilton's classic timepiece of the Thirties

The Boulton: available once again in a strictly limited edition, reproduced from the original dies and tooling.

In the Thirties, fine design and fine timepieces were a matter of personal pride—and Hamilton was a standard of excellence. Hamilton's Boulton watch was an instant success, eagerly sought and much admired.

A classic in 1934, reborn in 1982.

Some things never change. Indeed, the appreciation of fine classic timepieces is far higher today than it has been in many years. For this reason, Hamilton has reintroduced The Boulton, manufactured from the carefully preserved original dies and tooling, in a limited and registered edition for those who appreciate the beauty and value of a true classic.



A precision 17-jewel movement.

The precision 17-jewel mechanical movement of The Boulton has been updated with two recent watchmaking improvements: superior Incabloc shockproofing and a more durable mainspring. The movement of this fine watch is exceptionally accurate, and guaranteed for two full years.

The gold-plated numerals and solid brass hands are as cleanly styled and easy to read as on the original. The 10K gold-filled case, uniquely curved to fit the wrist, is hand-polished several times. Even the original pigskin strap has been reproduced.



The Boulton's styling is advanced even today. Notice how the watch is elegantly curved to fit more comfortably on your wrist.

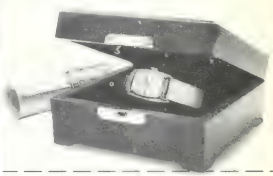
A strictly limited edition.

Only 2,032 of these fine timepieces have been made available in a strictly limited, registered edition. Of these, well over half have been purchased. After the remainder is acquired, the dies for The Boulton will be donated to the National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors in Columbia, Pennsylvania, and this classic Boulton watch will never again be available.

Hamilton's Boulton watch is $298, with tax, shipping and handling included. Each Boulton has been carefully packaged in a solid cherry presentation case, richly lined in plush burgundy velvet. A solid brass nameplate on the case will be engraved with three initials at no charge. An accompanying Certificate of Authenticity from Hamilton will bear the registered number of your watch, matched to an engraved number on the underside of the case.

The Hamilton Guarantee.

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TOOLS FOR LIVING

A PORTABLE TURBO HEATER



There are many space heaters on the market today but we've seen none quite so versatile as this turbo convector heater by DeLonghi. It functions as a portable free standing heater that can be moved easily from room to room or you can mount it on a wall (mounting brackets included). As a wall mounted unit it features a towel rail for warming towels or similar fabrics. And warmed towels are a real treat as you step from the tub or shower on a chilly morning! The turbo heater operates on 1,500 watts of electricity, gives 5,100 BTUs and plugs into any standard household outlet. As a convector heater it provides immediate heat and has a silent high velocity turbo fan for efficient circulation of heat. The fan has its own off/on switch so it can run simultaneously with the heater or independent of it for better air circulation year round. This turbo heater also has an adjustable thermostat that responds to the room temperature. There are no exposed elements, no odors and no fumes so the unit is entirely safe. It's 23" long, 16" high and weighs just 18 lbs. We can supply this UL listed heater for **$125.00** ($8.95) =A486.

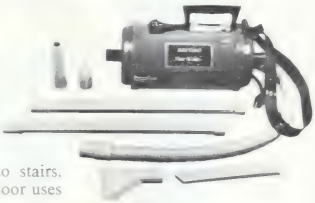


It mounts on walls.



It even warms towels.

ALL PURPOSE VAC-N-BLO



All vacuum cleaners are portable in the sense that they can be maneuvered quite easily from room to room. But when it comes to stairs, cars, garages and outdoor uses the conventional vacuum cleaner loses much of its portability. Here is a different breed of indoor/outdoor vacuum. The Metro Vac-n-Blo slips right over your shoulder, weighs less than 10 pounds and will go practically anywhere. Attach to one end and you have a vacuum with suction stronger than some full size canister machines. Attach to the other end and you have a 200 mph blower for cleaning walks and gutters and other outdoor jobs (there's even an adapter for blowing up inflatables). The Vac-n-Blo unit is made of steel with a permanent cloth bag and comes with a 3' flexible hose, 2-20"extension wands and 4 interchangeable nozzles. You will need to supply an extension cord. This UL listed Vac-n-Blo costs **$83.00** ($6.95) =A512. The American manufacturer supplies a one-year warranty. For more convenient indoor use, there is a conversion kit with a 3-wheel rollaround dolly, 3' flexible extension hose, dusting brush and swivel carpet/floor tool. **$22.00** ($2.95) =A511.



BAN THE BUCKET BRIGADE!



Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There *is* an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. Think of the steps waiting to be saved! This 50' (that is a *lot* of reach) vinyl hose readily attaches to any household faucet. From there you just take the water where you want it—an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off as needed. This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health as well as its beauty. The complete indoor garden hose kit costs just **$11.00** ($1.95) =A341.

ATTRACT DUST LIKE A MAGNET!



If we ever compile a book on *The Old Ways That Were Better Ways*, we will certainly include a chapter on the lambswool duster. This remarkable implement originated, the best we can tell, in 19th-century England where it quickly put the feather-duster to shame. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. When soiled, just wash it in warm soapy water. Let it dry, fluff it out and store it, hanging from a conveniently located hole at the end of its handle. We are happy to offer a 20" authentic lambswool duster for **$8.00** ($1.95) =A163.

SAVINGS IN THE SHOWER



Tools for Living has discovered a finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver manufactured by Con-Serv, which cuts the use of water—*hot water*—in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. Remember, heating water throughout the year is second only to the cost of heating the house. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gals. of water—much of it heated—every day. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of between $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. Con-Serv designed the new Deluxe Fuel Saver without compromising comfort or high quality. Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated—utilizing the Venturi principle—for an invigorating shower. It delivers a comfortable yet forceful spray—forceful enough to quickly rinse shampoo suds out of a long, thick mane of hair. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily over the standard ½" shower head arm with pliers or a wrench—no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for **$16.00** ($2.95) =A351.

XECUTIVE OCKET KNIFE



The pocket knife is a sappearing artifact. he clasp knife that for many years rested mfortably in count- ss overall pockets is uch too heavy and alky to slip into tai- red slacks. Now the pocket knife appears mostly among umpers, Boy Scouts and farmers who still cut plug tobacco. But e loss of the pocket knife has cost us all a great deal of nvenience. At least once a day some situation arises where a ife blade is called for—to open a letter or a box, to cut a cord or a read, to coax out a splinter or loosen a knot. So we were elighted to find this new line of pocket knives that have no more eight or bulk than about a dollar's worth of loose change. These nives are only 2" long and 5/16" thick (with a 1¼" well-honed ainless steel blade), but they are beautifully made and far more gged than their modest size suggests. The blade has a safety ck, so it cannot close accidentally. These stylish knives are rather ffectionately known as Big Bens and are available in two models: polished stainless steel for **$16.00** ($1.95) #A419; or with a ndalwood handle for **$16.00** ($1.95) #A420.

ONVERT A BULB

If your house is typical, you have t least two or three 3-way light xtures. *Now you can save $15 per xture when you next change the ght!* Here's how.

Three-way bulbs have some ajor shortcomings. They are no- ceably more expensive than regu- ar bulbs, and they come in a limited ange of sizes and styles. Also, a 30-70-100 watt -way light at the highest setting gives you only 285 lumens of light; a plain 100 watt bulb gives ou 1740 lumens.

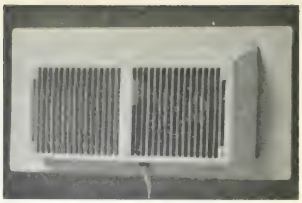


The Convert-A-Bulb adds 1½" in height to your light bulb.

The Convert-A-Bulb simply screws into your 3-way fixture and nables you to have *3-way action from a less expensive regular ightbulb.* You can use any screw-in standard base bulb from 7½ to 50 watts in your 3-way lamp with no loss of function! You also ain bulb life; 2 times rated life at the high setting, 6 times at nedium and 30 times at the low setting!

This is where it gets interesting. Let's assume you replace a 0-100-150 watt 3-way bulb with a regular 150 watt bulb. What do ou save? First, because of the lumen differential between regular nd 3-way bulbs, you now get at the medium setting the same mount of light you formerly had at the high setting—a savings of 7 watts per hour. Now the regular bulb at medium setting will last times its rated life of 750 hours, or a total of 4500 hours. The total avings is 121½ kwh. At 7¢ per kwh for electricity you save $8.50. Plus this: 3-way bulbs are usually rated at 1200 hours, so you'd eed four of them at $2.20 each to outlast this one regular bulb, at $1.50. That's another $730 savings for an overall windfall of $15.80 ver the life of *the first bulb alone!* The Convert-A-Bulb is U.L. listed. Buy one for **$9.00** ($1.95) #A495, two for **$17.00** ($1.95) #A496 or three for **$25.00** ($2.95) #A497.

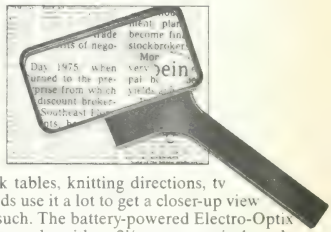
REGISTER FAN AND SEALERS



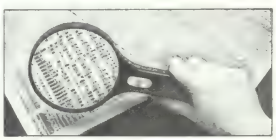
Every hot air heating system has at least one or two. Cold spots, that is—places that for some reason never quite get up to temperature. Often it is the rooms furthest from the furnace, an unusually large room, or rooms in a later addition. This booster fan (actually it is two small 4" fans running together) fits right in the register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out into the room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatically as the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which means you can use it in the summer to move the cool air off the floor and up into the room). The fan fits all registers up to 6"x14" and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9' of cord. The register fans cost **$40.00** ($3.95) #A536.

Magnetic Register Sealers prevent loss of air through unused outlets. Sealer kits require a ruler and scissors to install initially, after that they can be removed or replaced in a moment. Material for three 6"x14" register covers costs **$12.00** ($1.95) #A539.

CONQUER FINE PRINT



The best way to beat fine print is to blow it up—with an illuminated magnifier. We keep ours near the telephone and use it for the phone book, medicine labels, dictionaries, classified ads, stock tables, knitting directions, tv listings and maps. The kids use it a lot to get a closer-up view of bugs and flowers and such. The battery-powered Electro-Optix magnifiers are American-made with a 2½-power optical-grade plastic lens with a 5-power insert bifocal eye. The lenses are distortion free, water clear and shatterproof. We have these lighted magnifiers in two models—round, 4" diameter, 9 oz., using two "C" batteries for **$18.00** ($1.95) #A550; or rectangular, 2" x 4" reversible for either hand, 5 oz. using two "AA" batteries for **$16.00** ($1.95) #A551. Or buy both together for the special price of **$32.00** ($2.95) #A552 and put the smaller one in the car for map-reading.



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Next, learn what your source is really saying.

THE opening chords of a fellow gossip's song do not always match his chorus. You must translate.

The man or woman who says, "You must swear on your children's heads that this will never pass your lips, ever," often doesn't mean that at all. If told to a gossip in private practice, this instruction means you should tell only very close friends, blood relations, in-laws, and a couple of strangers in the A & P checkout line.

If told to a professional gossip, it usually means "Don't print it, at least not yet." In my experience, it has frequently turned out to mean wait until it has already been carried by Evans and Novak, "Entertainment Tonight," the *New York Post*'s "Page Six," and Jack Anderson.

"This is strictly between us, right?" This actually means tell only people you're on lunching terms with, and only one at a time.

"If I hear you've repeated this, I'll never speak to you again," said by a friend, means your friend doesn't like you, and the friendship is a sham. Perhaps you should reexamine your relationship.

"If this gets traced back to me, I'll end up in cement shoes under the Blue Plains sewage plant." Your friend, or his wife, heard it from her manicurist that morning.

"I've been thinking about you. I'd love to see you sometime soon. When can we get together at my club for lunch?" Or, in other words, "I expect you've heard what's going around about me. I'd better get in my two cents' worth before you pass it on."

"I don't know if you can do anything with this" or "I don't know if this is really good enough for you" are two opening gambits probably used only to professional gossips. They usually precede what is known in the trade as a Hot One.

Other lines strangers use to professional gossips include, "Can you meet me somewhere quiet? I've got something that will really set this town on fire." This means "I want to talk about a new cookbook."

"I can't tell you my name" means "I'm a flack."

"I can't tell you my name. But I want to tell you something about this really terrific person who's going to make a mark on this city" means "I'm a flack who's talking about me."

And the variation, "I can't tell you my name. But have you been following the stories about Congressman So-and-so?" means "I'm the flack who's pushing his opponent in the next election."

A word of caution here. One excellent gossip—the first Democrat invited out to lunch when things look as though they are about to get interesting—has been conducting some sinister experiments with gossip. He sometimes confides one scrap exclusively to one friend, a different scrap to another. "It is interesting to see how many people call back and tell you the same item," he says.

By the way, don't snoop.

THE quality of gossip is not strained, and good gossip is not to be confused with scandal-mongering.

The difference is the difference between, say, simple *Schadenfreude* —the Germans' delightful inclination to enjoy others' discomfort— and the same nation's less attractive habit of waging wars or breeding revolutionaries in order to *make* others uncomfortable.

Do not look to the coded gossip, please, to steal a lock of President Reagan's snipped hair from a barber shop, and then race off to a chemist's to test it for dye. Do not expect him to snatch somebody's garbage and sift through it with glittering eyes, counting liquor bottles and birth-control-pill dispensers. He will not loiter at the "social" Safeway in Georgetown, fingering artichokes by the hour, to learn what grade of greens the secretary of agriculture's wife will serve at dinner.

The term "idle gossip" means exactly what it says. If you work at gossip, it regrettably turns into an ungentlemanly pastime called investigative reporting. Of course, a coded gossip is not a snob. He is delighted to hear and pass on the results of energetic snooping performed and communicated by less fastidious friends.

WHILE the shah of Iran languished in exile in Panama, his former ambassador to the U.S., the sociable Ardeshir Zahedi, was assigned to send him long international gossip reports from his Swiss retreat. These began promisingly: "I kiss your feet thousands and thousands of times and beg you to allow me to report . . ." Such foreplay isn't normally necessary, but sets a pleasant mood. I am trying to instigate something of the sort among my regular sources, to develop in them the necessary joy of gossip. However, there can be no joy without floaters.

Pass on the floaters is an essential clause in the code. One delightful morsel must have cheered the shah's declining months considerably. Several Swiss and American financiers declared that the ayatollah we saw speaking unkindly of His Imperial Majesty and the American devils could not possibly be the real one. Everyone knew, they said, that the real Khomeini had lost a finger on one hand before he withdrew into exile in Paris. And yet the leader we now saw scowling from posters and huddling in Qom boasted two complete sets of digits. One banker swore he had read of the Fickle Finger in *Foreign Policy* magazine. At a particular newspaper, clerks were set to work to scan a year's back issues. The old *Washington Star*'s photo files were combed for evidence of the pertinent pinky. There was none. The finger was a floater.

Washington was hugely diverted, in 1976, at a Georgetown dinner party where the hostess passed around copies of the *Thunderbolt*, a scurrilous Southern publication containing the floater that Jimmy Carter was the illegitimate son of Jo-

seph Kennedy, conceived while Miss Lillian was working as a Kennedy secretary.

Other classic floaters include the story that a UFO crashed during the Eisenhower administration and several small green bodies are packed in ice at Wright-Paterson Air Force Base; or the much publicized floater that Paul McCartney had been dead for some time, and if you knew how to decode it you would find the words "I buried Paul" moaned at the end of the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever." Just because floaters are not true doesn't mean they're not fun to mention.

Do not cut off gossip at its source.

OF COURSE you must return your phone calls. But the resourceful gossip will also appreciate the potential of eavesdropping, especially if you do not have to strain your neck or clamp a glass against a wall to do it. If, for example, the Almighty or the maitre d' seats you next to a choice gossipee at a restaurant, he's all yours. Liz Smith once heard everything Bob Strauss thought about Jimmy Carter this way—("I like the little guy. But that born-again-Christian stuff!")—and printed it, remaining strictly within the confines of the code.

Residents of Washington's fashionable Kalorama Square complex enjoyed many enlightening conversations between a high-powered couple who had not figured out their elaborate floor-to-floor intercom system. Their every word was boomed out over the courtyard mall's loudspeaker security system to the entire community. Of course, nobody told them of their Living Theater performances for more than a year.

Above all, do not feel sorry for gossipees. Honestly, they don't feel a thing.

AN AUNT of mine believed that cows jump for joy when they think of providing the human race with so much delicious nourishment. I definitely believe that some people adore being gossiped about. Jacqueline Onassis is said to follow all the gossip about herself avidly. The late John Lennon mentioned at the Carter inauguration that "Yoko and I love the *National Star*." He told me, "It's the first thing we read every Monday." A Philadelphia publication began a gossip column called "Loose Lips," in which you could buy a mention for a small fee. It apparently did quite well.

Most people who are gossiped about have plenty of compensations. Only a few—like the Kennedys—are in a position to demand that their associates choose between their friendship and gossiping. In return, they are gossiped about for "owning all their friends." But well-mannered gossipees pretend not to notice anything they don't like. Betty Ford always graciously declared she "did not read" her press secretary Sheila Weidenfeld's book gossiping about her.

In Washington, discretion is the virtue most coveted among the mighty's friends, and the professional gossip would do well to pay lip service to this ideal.

"I never say anything in a room with more than two people in it," remarked former DNC chairman Robert Strauss, when the entire transcript of what was supposedly a private party at the Averell Harrimans' was leaked to the press. (This was after Strauss's little experience with Liz Smith.)

Some Washingtonians end up gossiping to themselves, simply because they don't trust anyone else. Ron Nessen, as Jerry Ford's press secretary, used to gossip in solitude into a tape recorder at the end of every evening, and didn't debrief it until Mr. Ford lost the election.

Not everyone is that patient. A few techniques for maintaining a close-mouthed image, while gossiping like midwives at a lying-in, have been polished. There's the "you call and I'll raise" ploy, popular among members of Washington's permanent village. In a nutshell: ask no questions. Always let another bring up the hot topic. In return, you then embellish with the juiciest details you know. This procedure gives its finest practitioners all the pleasures of the gossip without the blabbermouth's reputation. If you know no juicy details, you simply roll your eyes—a trick that may call forth further elaborations on which you cannot be quoted.

In some parts of the world, people find political figures thin pickings for gossip. This is perverse. Parisian political buffs eat life-sized ice-cream heads of their favorite candidates, widely sold at election time. There, a friend reports, a hostess created a *scandale* by serving up Giscard, Mitterrand, and Marchais at one sitting. In the States, and particularly in Washington, we are more broad-minded. As long as there are tongues and dinners, the collective gossip memory can serve up all our leaders at once—sliced, creamed, and cold.

Sometimes it's hard to catch your breath in so very virtuous a city as Washington, where the air is so thick with big talk. Most of the powerful theoretically maintain their comfortable perches by clean living, and also by a steady onslaught of high-flown sentiments sonorously delivered. But even for them—and especially for those others who may find themselves sailing a little close to the wind—conscience is often synonymous with fear of gossip. So, you see, the city would be even less honest without its Great Leveler. It would also, of course, be profoundly drear, since it is only the cleansing breeze of small talk that makes the big talk bearable. Like the item about Mr. Desai, for example.

Morarji Desai was said to be a first-rate prime minister of India, and a worthy man, but, sadly, the name of his political party slid off my memory track a year or so ago. In fact, all I can recall of Mr. D. is that he drank a glass of his own urine, straight up and hold the olive, every morning. I remember his explanation, too. His home-brewed pick-me-up cured cancer, cleared cataracts, wiped out tuberculosis, and obeyed some Biblical injunction about drinking from your own cistern. Now that is the sort of thing one remembers and savors. ■

WAITING FOR INTERFERON

What happens when people's hopes run ahead of the scientific method.

by Charles Fox

TWO MONTHS after my twenty-ninth birthday, a neurologist at New York University Hospital told me he thought I had MS. His name was Albert Goldman. I remember how peculiarly satisfied he seemed. I didn't know then that satisfaction in neurology is largely confined to diagnosis. I didn't even know what multiple sclerosis was.

I knew it was bad because I'd seen ads in the subway appealing for research funds. I said I wished I'd come to him a year earlier when I'd first noticed the signs. I'm a writer and a proficient two-finger typist. A persistent loss of sensation in my right index finger, together with a very minor loss of balance, had begun to worry me. Goldman said I'd saved myself a year of worry and that I probably had one good year left. He invited me to enter the hospital for tests. I decided on the spot to go to London for a second opinion. England supposedly has the best diagnostic neurologists. In a matter of this sort it made sense to consult the best. And besides, as fellow Englishmen, the doctors would speak my language. I had been profoundly disturbed by Dr. Goldman's artlessness. It made me feel that neurologists should be controlled by law on the matter of issuing a prognosis. Without delay, I arranged to see Dr. Dennis Williams, then head of the National Hospital for Neurological Diseases in Queens Square.

I was shown into a library to wait for Williams, then led by an elderly nurse through silent stone halls, past high, closed doors. The place was not encouraging. Williams, however, was. A small, soft-spoken, white-haired man who occupied a cavernous office, he said he didn't think I had MS. I'd been going through a divorce; we talked about the stress of it. I could believe him or not, he said, but he was one of the world's three or four leading neurologists. Gently reassuring, Williams told me to go home to California and be with my children and to forget this whole thing.

A year later I saw Williams again. The symptoms were worse. I had an increased loss of sensation, and fatigue in my legs. Again he gently advised me not to worry. "Go home and live your life to your capacity," he said. "And please, stay away from us neurologists. There's nothing we can do for you." Later I learned from a letter he'd written to my GP that Williams had always been less hopeful than he seemed.

I was too shocked by the realization that my doctors could do nothing for me to take Williams's advice. I began to explore Eastern medicine and other forms of treatment. I went to Taiwan for acupuncture, to Tel Aviv for "body work" (a regimen that aims to reeducate the nervous system), to Athens for homeopathy. I met interesting people and heard strange stories. But I found no solution. By degrees my legs grew weaker; sometimes I had difficulty writing and talking. I was incontinent. Now I am thirty-nine, and for the last two years I have been in a wheelchair. I am what neurologists call a "seven." That is, I cannot walk but I can transfer from the chair unaided.

It took years to understand Williams's advice: not to allow the disease to become the center of my life, not to become caught up in its charisma. The symptoms of MS are so erratic and diverse that it is easy to become obsessed with monitoring them.

I only truly made peace with myself after volunteering to be a guinea pig for a very promising substance. Within a month I'd been knocked off my legs and blinded—temporarily, as it turned out. Lying abed after this bout, I realized that I must somehow go beyond thought if I was to have a chance of recovery, or simply to enjoy my existence. Life isn't much fun lived in fear of the future. Nothing unnerves a child more than a parent's mulling over

Charles Fox is working on a novel and a screenplay. He lives in California.

The author, his three children, and his friend, Brooke.



death. So I had to accept the circumstances of my life without resigning myself to despair. In so doing, I would take no position and thus create no opposition. It had something to do with what Moshe Feldenkrais, the Israeli particle physicist and body worker, had said to me in Tel Aviv, "I don't know much about this disease of yours, but I can tell you one thing: as long as you think you've got it, you've got it."

So began a new phase. I sold a novel to the movies and for the first time in my life was financially stable. I was settled in California; in due course my children came to live with me, and I met a woman whose company brought me great pleasure and stability. Life in a wheelchair, much as I had dreaded and resisted it, turned out to be easier than struggling to walk. I maintained a stable regimen of meditation and diet, and I made my peace with the future. Steadily, if undramatically, my condition improved. I began to be able to read, write, dress, and propel myself. After a year, I passed a test and began driving again.

IN MARCH 1980, I read a *Time* cover story on interferon—the highly touted chemical produced by human cells, the potential wonder drug, medicine's great white hope in the cancer war, the new penicillin, the first, dare we say it, "broad spectrum antiviral agent."

The article did not mention multiple sclerosis. However, there was an obvious connection to be made. MS is generally held to be an abnormal reaction to a slow-incubating virus. The reaction may be caused by a genetic flaw or an autoimmune disfunction whereby the body's immune system—its mechanism for fighting disease—either lacks some essential component or for some reason has turned against itself. Either way, the fatty myelin sheath that covers and insulates nerve fibers of the brain and spinal cord slowly, progressively breaks down and causes short-circuiting of nerve impulses.

The arsenal of effects is bizarre. In MS, eyes and the extremities seem to be the most commonly affected. The symptoms range from double vision and minor loss of sensation—"glove and stocking anesthesia"—to blindness in one or both eyes and/or paralysis. I cannot sweat. For a while I lost sensation in my tongue, which felt as if it had been scorched. Memory may fade; the personality may change. Growing paralysis, they say, tends to produce increased withdrawal. I'm not surprised; it gets hard to keep up with the world. All these symptoms may occur to a greater or lesser extent. The disease may eventually kill you; it may disappear. It exacerbates and remits (comes and goes), particularly in the early stages.

Because the degree of severity and permanence of MS is so varied, it may often be difficult to know who's got the disease and who hasn't. Some cases are never diagnosed, others are impossible to diagnose, since there is no foolproof method. The MS Society reckons that there may be half a million cases in the U.S., with 5,000 or 6,000 new ones diagnosed annually.

Anyway, if the cause of MS is viral or lack of defense, interferon—which seems to stimulate antiviral resistance in cells—might well be an answer. Tentatively, without any real sense of hope, I began to ask about interferon.

A doctor friend found that a trial was being sponsored locally by the MS Society—at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco. However, they were only considering ambulatory patients, so I was too late. The longer you have the disease, the less interesting you are to researchers, because your nervous system has less chance of regeneration. It was like getting to be an old ball player, I supposed. I didn't get upset; it would have been a violation of the truce I had made in accepting the course of the disease in order to live at peace with myself.

But at the end of last November, a friend called from Los Angeles and read me a piece by Harry Nelson in the *Los Angeles Times*:

> *Episodes of ever worsening symptoms that plague multiple sclerosis patients have been reduced significantly by giving . . .* [fibroblast] *interferon, the highly publicized anti-viral chemical, according to a group of Buffalo scientists. . . . improvement has persisted for more than one and a half years (according to an article to be published in the current issue of* Science*).*
>
> *Dr. Lawrence Jacobs of the Dent Neurologic Institute at Millard Fillmore Hospital in Buffalo . . . said that while the anti-viral chemical does not reverse damage that has already occurred, it may stop or slow down progression.*

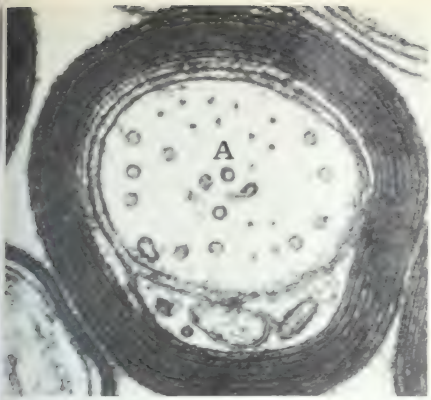
Jacobs's method had been to inject the interferon intrathecally—that is, via lumbar puncture into the cerebrospinal fluid. That made sense to me. The central nervous system (brain and spinal cord)—which is the target of the disease—is housed in the spine. I feel the presence of the disease there all the time.

In the inevitable disclaimer, Dr. Stanley Van der Noort, chairman of the medical advisory board of the MS Society, said he hoped multiple sclerosis patients would not become too enthusiastic about interferon at this time.

"The cost of it is prohibitive. We shouldn't stimulate interest in something we can't provide.

"Until interferon can be manufactured using newly developed recombinant-DNA techniques—assuming further tests validate its usefulness—there is no way to supply the need."

I got a copy of the *Science* article. Interferon certainly did look promising. But now what to do? I didn't fully discuss the alternatives with anyone. Because the symptoms come and go, you learn to avoid



This is an electromicrograph showing a normal myelin sheath at the highest possible magnification. The sheath is seen as the spirally wrapped membrane around the nerve fiber or axon (A).



This is the spinal cord of a guinea pig with chronic, relapsing EAE. The myelin sheath around the axon (A) shows active breakdown. This is due to the action of the macrophage (M), which eats the myelin. There are also naked axons which have been demyelinated by this process. Also shown (see arrows) is a process of repair—remyelination. This is demonstrated by thin layers of myelin (which are black) around several axons.

inflicting your changing opinions and stratagems on those around you. I kept wondering whether interferon was worth breaking the peace over. I could wait—but for how long? Things don't stand still. They get better or they get worse, and in my case they had, for the moment, ceased to improve.

I could launch an investigation and then, if warranted, a deliberate search for an extremely rare, securely guarded substance whose efficacy was unproven and which, someone had said, was so expensive that even the late shah of Iran had been unable to afford it. Such an effort would be dangerous for, inevitably, it would be stressful, and stress would exacerbate the disease. The search would require me to make the disease the central issue of my life once more. To succeed, I'd probably have to behave as if my life depended on it. How would I do that and keep myself from *believing* that it did? What if I failed, and then, according to the odds, failed again?

On the other hand, by not investigating, I would be simply capitulating to the charisma of the disease. To sit quietly out here in the country and fade away, accepting my circumstances, would be to deny my curiosity—itself a measure of life—and the function of my profession as a reporter.

Obviously, if I did choose to begin this search it would have to be as an inquiring reporter. One disadvantage of having struggled to follow Williams's advice was that I had no neurologist. The last one I had seen said to me, as I lay in a hospital bed, "Do you want to know what I think of everything you've been doing? I think it's nonsense." And he ascribed any benefit I spoke of to the "placebo effect"—treatment that works because the patient thinks it works. I wondered whether he might be right. I wondered whether to deny the placebo effect to a patient for whom one could do essentially nothing was in accordance with the Hippocratic oath, which begins, "First do no harm . . ." The medical establishment, of course, is understandably cautious in the face of a capricious disease like MS. This caution may easily be mistaken for pessimism. Without reproducible results obtained in traditional ways, doctors are reluctant to entertain the idea that any unorthodox treatment might be successful, although they will admit that the standard treatment for MS is, in the words of the *Science* report, "grossly ineffective."

JUST GOING off to some storefront neurologist to get interferon would be like going to the Coast Guard to ask for the use of an atomic sub. In order to handle an experimental drug an accredited researcher must first obtain an Investigational New Drug Number (IND) from the Food and Drug Administration, a whole medicine show unto itself. Accredited researchers tend to be obsessive by nature. They are the Nobel prize winners who have syndromes and diseases named after them. They rarely find time to talk to each other, let alone to patients in wheelchairs. But with someone from the media—especially the responsible media—it's a different story. Publicity can mean money, and money for research is drying up, with more and more researchers competing for less and less. So if you wish to speak to researchers riding the crest of the wave and you don't have the money to fund them yourself, you go as the man from the media.

I made my decision. I went to my agent and asked her to get me an assignment from a good magazine. This would give me the means to go and find out for myself what the real story was and whether it was really worth chasing interferon. If it was, then the first choice would most probably be to get into Jacobs's study in Buffalo, or one trying to duplicate his findings.

It seemed likely that there would be two sources of interferon: legitimate and illegitimate, and as many ways of procuring the stuff. I would launch an inquiry on both fronts simultaneously.

First, I had to determine whether or not I could just walk into a drugstore in some state and buy interferon over the counter. I learned about the FDA's rigorous methodology of proof for new drugs, and that the states follow this procedure, though they can, and sometimes do, opt to license an unapproved drug for use within their jurisdiction.

There is a forbidden list that keeps narcotics under the table and on the street. New Jersey couldn't suddenly approve heroin, for instance. But you can get laetrile in twenty-four states, although the FDA says it's worthless, and in Oklahoma you can get liliaverum, a lily extract, to treat your cancer. You can buy DMSO in fifty-five-gallon drums to degrease your truck fleet, or from a vet to treat your horse, or from an internist to treat your liver. That's all approved. But don't let them catch you using DMSO to treat your arthritis—which is what most people do.

My first inquiries showed that interferon is well and truly under the FDA's thumb. It was not available anywhere on the continent; I was not interested in Mexico. I did find an interesting possibility in Florida, however. There, on March 16, 1982, over the governor's veto, the Florida state assembly passed an Unconventional Therapies Act, effective from this fall, which is being broadly interpreted to permit doctors and patients to decide among themselves which drugs are appropriate and which are not. Florida therefore interested me greatly. In the meantime, I began to look around for a trial that I could get into. The only kind that would not interest me was a double blind.

There are three phases to the FDA's new-drug-licensing procedure: Phase 1, a very limited study to determine whether patients can tolerate the material; Phase 2, a slightly larger study, in which they still watch for side effects but also begin to look for signs of efficacy; Phase 3, usually a large study with a large number of patients, designed purely to prove efficacy. To that end, the trial is generally blinded or double-blinded. Blinding means that somebody gets the real stuff and somebody else gets a placebo but the patients are not told who is getting what. In a double blind, not even the administering doctors or nurses are told.

The double blind is de rigueur for FDA approval. This presents scientists with serious ethical problems. The patients who participate in a double-blind experiment have no guarantee that they are actually getting the drug that may benefit them greatly. Then there are the side effects. In order to establish an effective double blind, scientists have to make sure that the patients not receiving the drug nevertheless suffer side effects similar to those afflicting the patients who *are* receiving the drug. The result is needless pain and the risk of real danger to the health of the patients. Jacobs had chosen not to double blind his interferon study, and, as I later found out, had been severely criticized for it.

If I failed to get into a legitimate test, my second choice would be to discover Jacobs's exact procedure, get hold of some interferon, and then find a doctor (preferably one with hospital privileges in case things went wrong) who would be willing to shoot me up. And I'd have to get him the necessary material. I gently suggested this to some doctor friends, gave them copies of the *Science* article, and turned to finding out about interferon.

First I read an excellent primer called *Interferon*, by Mike Edelhart, with a foreword by interferon's co-discoverer, Jean Lindemann, entitled "The Agony of Expectation." Then I called Jacobs, but he was not available. I was relieved. It would be better to talk to the man face to face, in any case. I made an appointment instead with the public relations woman at Genentech, Inc.

GENENTECH is one of the country's four big gene splicers. Within a year it may have human insulin on the market—the first recombinant-DNA product to reach the public. The company's headquarters are in south San Francisco, in what has become known locally as Siliclone Valley. Genentech went public in 1980 with a $35 million offer that sold out in minutes.

If you were a venture capitalist with stock in genes, what would you like? Of course a cancer cure, but how about an interferon strep-throat spray? Or something to cure the common cold? The great thing about aspirin, for example, is that it can be used for almost anything. Bayer has never looked back since it put aspirin on the market in 1897. The corollary for patients is that the more esoteric their disease, the longer they have to wait.

I arrived at Genentech with my friend Brooke, and several questions. Had interferon been cloned? If it had, was it working? Was there a trial I could get into? If not, how much would the drug cost me? How could I get some? And I wondered if they wouldn't just assume I was after some anyway when I appeared in a wheelchair.

The PR woman had forgotten the appointment. This was good; I was past the flack. Instead Gary Hooper, the marketing manager, appeared. He is an enthusiastic, bright, lively man, and he didn't

at an eye at the wheelchair. Genentech, he said, nploys 350 people, including a staff patent at- rney. Their average age is thirty-two. Hooper owed Brooke and me into a small conference om and gave us a talk he was preparing, presum- ly for marketing purposes, illustrated with slides. terferons, he explained, are a group of proteins at may invoke antiviral resistance in a cell and ow the rate of that cell's multiplication. These ings are known—everything else is speculative or proven.

A virus attacks a cell by attaching itself to the ell membrane and injecting through it rogue DNA, hich preempts the cell's programming in favor of e virus. The invaded cell, however, releases inter- ron, which migrates through the cell membrane to the intercellular fluid and seemingly attaches it- elf to the membrane of an adjacent cell. Stimulated y its presence, this cell somehow responds by tak- g on an antiviral state. The cell may be unable ward off the virus completely, but it will be more kely to resist replicating the virus, thereby con- ining it.

Virtually all vertebrates produce interferon, but ost are not effectively transferable. Human inter- rons come from three types of cells, although each ell may produce more than one type. These are eukocytes (white blood cells), now known as "al- ha"; fibroblast (progenitors of connective tissue), nown as "beta"; and the T-lymphocytes (immune- ystem cells produced by the thymus), known as gamma." It was fibroblast that Dr. Jacobs had sed.

Gary Hooper said that at least twelve alpha, two eta, and one gamma were known so far. He said hat Genentech had synthesized all of these. The ompany was examining the effect of each type on umors and viruses, and preparing to make hybrids, hat is, to combine the gene for one type of alpha vith the gene for another, a process that, it appears, vill make an interferon more active than either one lone.

Hoffmann-La Roche financed Genentech's research nd production of recombinant-DNA alpha and eta interferon, and the two companies will share oyalties. But Genentech holds a solid patent on an lpha hybrid and, said Hooper, "We are keeping im- nune [gamma] interferon for ourselves. We've fi- anced our own research and everyone feels immune gamma] interferon is more potent than leukocyte r fibroblast."

The world was changing around me as I listened. But what about fibroblast? Genentech has it, Hooper aid, but not in trials at the moment. About the cost he said only that it would come down. They were uilding a large plant across the street to produce interferon and human growth hormone, now in trials at Stanford Medical School.

I told Hooper I had overheard two men in the lobby discussing security. "We haven't had any industrial espionage," he said. "It's from individuals. We get a lot of heartbreaking calls from people who are terminally ill with cancer, or parents of dwarfs trying to get human growth hormone for their kids, legally or illegally. Human growth hormone's on the fast track with the FDA, but if you've got a kid who's a dwarf and is approaching puberty, it may not be fast enough for you."

We left Genentech and drove south to Stanford University for a second interview. I was dazed, my brain already overloaded. The journey Hooper had taken us on through his microworld had changed all my assumptions. Interferons had been cloned. In the process, medicine seemed to have gone from the age of steam to electricity. But I needed to know if the new recombinant-DNA material was effective, and if so, what it could do for me.

Dr. Coleman Smith gave me some answers over lunch. Dr. Smith, somewhere in his thirties, was on the verge of leaving Stanford Medical School's department of infectious diseases and returning home to Sydney. I had gotten his name and that of his boss, Professor Tom Merigan, the country's leading authority on interferon, through the friend of a friend, which seemed to be the way my research was going. I told Smith that Genentech was looking to get a recombinant-DNA interferon on the market by the mid-Eighties. He replied, "If the studies we're doing at the moment hold up, they may be right." He told me that recombinant-DNA material affects the hepatitis virus in measurable ways. "You measure the virus in the blood, you give interferon, and the level goes down. Stop, and the level goes back up."

This sounded very promising. Why, then, are the years of testing and double-blind experiments necessary before interferon can be made available? Smith smiled sadly at me. "Simply lowering the level of the virus may not alleviate the disease," he said. "I know it's easy for me to say, sitting here, but what you've got to understand is that the present generation has to be sacrificed for future ones. Wide-scale administration of a drug like interferon at this point would muddy the field. We would never truly know how it is best used."

I looked at him across the table and wondered whether it was indeed future generations we were protecting, or, rather, the procedures of present-day clinicians and researchers.

At the university itself we met Professor Tom Merigan, a most distinguished man, who has been working with interferon for fifteen years. He is short and powerful, built like a baseball catcher. Secretaries sit outside his study door, while inside there are lots of certificates in black frames, medals, and awards. Among many other things, Merigan is conducting one section of a multicenter, three-year, double-blind study with leukocyte interferon, ini-

tiated and funded by the National MS Society. Only twenty-four patients are involved in this major study, twelve of them at the Scripps Institute in La Jolla, California and twelve in San Francisco at the UC Medical Center. Merigan told me that for six months the patients give themselves a daily shot, at home, of a relatively impure human leukocyte interferon or of placebo. They don't know which, of course, and nor do the doctors examining them. Then, after a year off the therapy—the so-called washout period—they are given the other treatment.

"As this experiment is a true double blind," he said, "there will be no interpretations until the codes are broken at the end of the year." I realized that this was the trial I had heard about in 1980 but had not been eligible for. So, for my purposes, that was that. The subject was closed, a faint possibility eliminated.

I turned my attention back to Merigan. The enthusiasm Hooper's talk had engendered still flailed about in me. It was pure frustration to be in the presence of a man who knew so much and not even know what to ask. "Is it realistic," I asked, "to think of interferon in terms of a broad-spectrum antiviral agent?" He shook his head and began talking instead about targeting, that is, targeting specific drugs to specific viruses. Like making "smart" missiles.

"This we can do when we have specific understanding of the virus," he explained. "To discover how to target a virus, you have to discover its unique enzymes, which means you have to study some viral molecular biology and enzymology done over the last fifteen or twenty years. We're moving ahead on this now."

As we left, Merigan shook hands and looked at me with a grin. "I see you're doing two stories at once," he said.

The problem with MS is that the role of a virus has yet to be established. About five years ago, a group of researchers on Staten Island in New York firmly declared, "MS is an abnormal reaction to a virus," and the prestigious British journal *The Lancet* announced with a fanfare that MS "can now be removed from the list of diseases of unknown cause." But somewhere along the line this lead faltered and ran out. Over the last ten years, many viruses have been accused of being the one responsible for MS. Herpes and measles viruses are the MS Society favorites at the moment. There have been clear epidemics of MS. But no one has tied all this information together yet. There's nothing to target.

NEXT WE WENT to Cetus, Inc., another of the four big gene splicers, with headquarters in Berkeley and an agricultural division in Madison, Wisconsin. Its people are largely involved in a synthetic-fuel program sponsored by National Distillers, a fructose program sponsored by Chevron, and an interferon program sponsored by Shell Oil.

Dr. Budd Colby manages the interferon program. He also helped put together the interferon program for Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. He is a swift and lanky man, and his intensity is, like Merigan's, inspiring. In the first two years of the Cetus-Shell interferon program, Shell invested $25 million. Colby is clearly riding high. His Cetus crew is inventing and targeting second-generation interferons. These he defines as any derivative of a natural human interferon. They are doing what Hooper spoke of at Genentech: synthesizing new interferon molecules by splicing parts of the DNA strand of one interferon with other interferons; joining a section of, say, one alpha molecule with another. Making specific substitutions or random alterations. "Basically," he says, "we're using our technology to construct molecules."

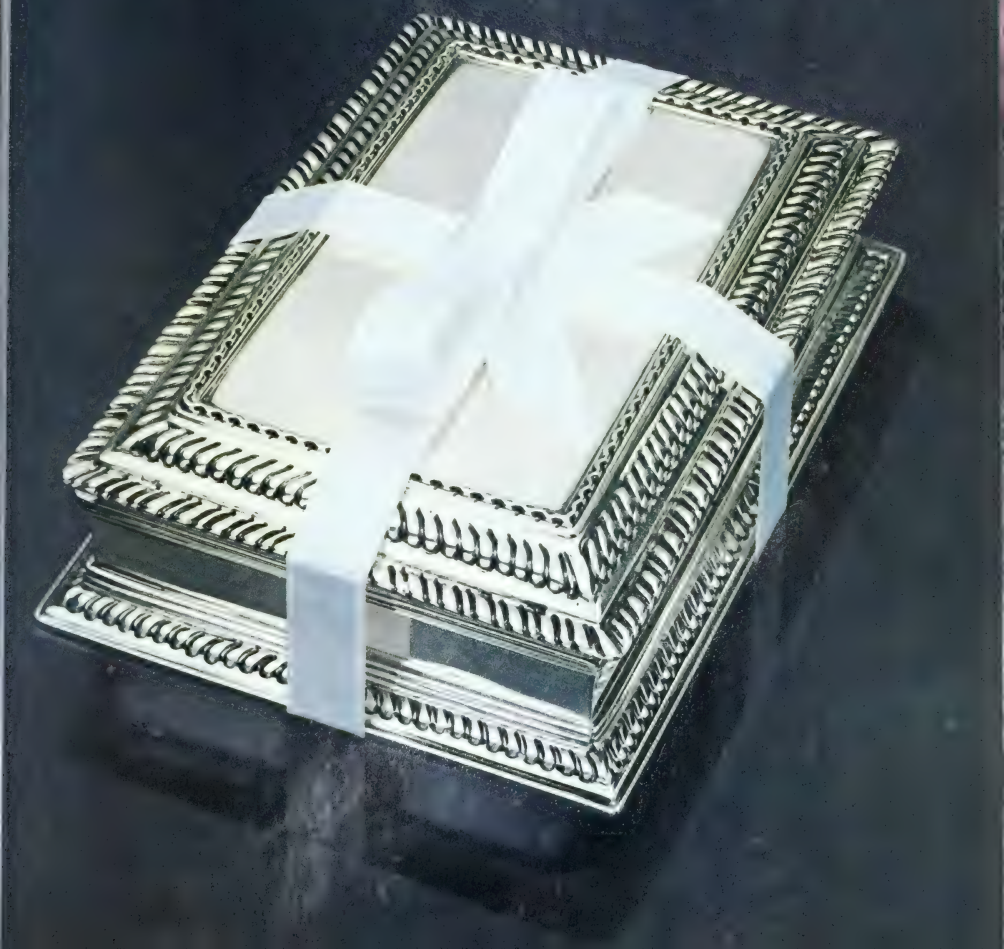
Colby explained what he called "the obligatory coupling of structure and function," whereby different molecules of different structures inevitably have different biological properties. He said that the whole idea behind second-generation interferons was "to know that basic principle, apply it initially, empirically see what happens, derive an understanding, and then consciously design interferon molecules that are either targeted to a specific site, a specific disease, or have enhanced or reduced biological activities that would be useful."

As I struggled to follow the significance of what he was saying, a light went on in my head. I said, "You might discover the source of a disease this way." He agreed.

We discussed the mysterious ways in which interferon actually works. Colby said that all of the mechanistic work that had been done so far—in the Sixties and Seventies—concerned interferon's antiviral mechanism. But the way in which it inhibits cell replication, which perhaps is connected with inhibiting tumors, is not yet understood at a molecular level.

Colby was alluding to the kind of basic research that leads to major discoveries. Interferon was discovered in 1957 by two people who were doing some very basic research in the laboratory. This open-ended research is never funded by the private sector, whose interests are specific and short-term. It occurred to me that just when medical research was being revolutionized by these biological discoveries, the government funding that was vital to its development was being cut back. I asked Colby about the cuts and he exclaimed, "It's a disaster!" adding, "If in 1970 someone had asked whether the federal government should be pouring tax dollars into someone's looking at enzymes that seem to destroy the DNA of bacteria living in your gut, on the assumption that this had anything to do with cancer or human disease, the average man in the street and two

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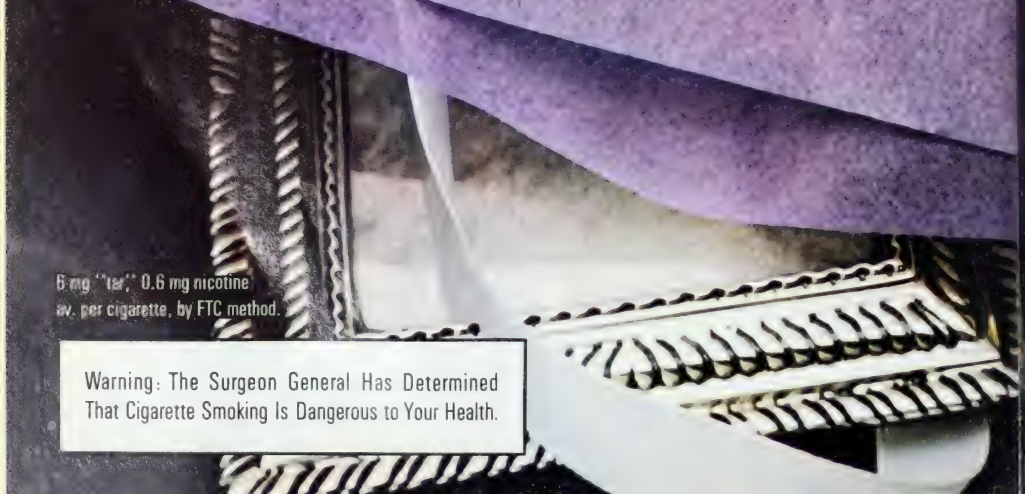


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thirds of the scientists would have said, 'Nah.' But," he said, "in fact, restriction enzymes are the fundamental basis of the technology that's now producing interferon, human growth hormones, and all the other wonderful things we're making. That basic research developed into recombinant-DNA technology and is the basis for revolutionizing the pharmaceutical industry. In time, biological disorders in human beings will be consciously treated with biology rather than with chemistry. With effective molecules rather than with poisons. That's a *major transition* in medicine and in pharmacology."

Inflamed by his own enthusiasm, Colby went on talking about the potential uses of interferon. "Let's say you're a physician," he said. "Wouldn't it be lovely to have an interferon that inhibited the growth of a tumor in your patient but didn't, at the same time, knock the hell out of his immune system—as chemotherapy and radiation do? And if you were dealing with a viral infection, wouldn't it be nice to have an interferon that could induce cells to resist viral infections but not inhibit the replication of bone-marrow cells, which are rather nice to have?"

Indeed, wouldn't it be nice. A sense of hope was beginning to erode my defenses. I took a deep breath and asked Colby what he thought about the work of Jacobs in Buffalo. He smiled and called it, carefully, "an extraordinarily limited study with very interesting findings that demand appropriate, large-scale, serious clinical experiments to determine the limits of the indications." He told me that Cetus was about to conduct a preliminary clinical trial with beta (fibroblast) interferon. I was encouraged, but what *I* was looking for was a more advanced study with an approved beta (fibroblast) product.

We got lost in the Oakland docks getting back to the Bay Bridge. The peculiar exhilaration and weight of Colby's words waged war in me. The thought of unrestricted interferons was at once elating, not simply for the possible change it might bring to my life, but for the sense of freedom it gave me to be able to assume responsibility for myself, to regain the freedom of choice that seems denied under the methodology of proof adopted by orthodox Western medicine. But at the same time I felt the weight of that responsibility, to come home the bearer of such good news, though it might not be for me. My back was afire, my legs felt numb. Gradually I grew more depressed than I had been in a long time.

I have always tried to bear in mind the lesson I was taught by being blinded. Then, I had thrashed about in great fear, clamoring, clutching, completely ineffectual, spreading chaos. In the midst of this, my vision was returned, as simply and directly as if a cloud far above me had moved off the sun. In that instant, I caught sight of myself and heard my voice shouting into a sudden silence, and I saw how completely I was controlled by my fear and I was ashamed. I was able to come to terms with it from then on. As I drove back from my interview with Colby, I felt that the fear that his words had revived in me—the fear that it might be too late for me, that I might be left out—was once again controlling me.

AFTER I returned from Oakland, I spoke with a friend in New York whose husband had died of cancer two years before. They had, with great difficulty, smuggled interferon in from Israel but he had died anyway. She, however, knew people in Miami making interferon, and she gave me a number. That same afternoon another friend gave me the number of a TV producer who had lymphoma and who told me of other manufacturers in Miami. She warned me that they were overcharging.

The thought of unrestricted interferon excited me, and not just because of what it might do. If I went after it, I would be assuming responsibility for myself and exercising my freedom to choose, a privilege of which the orthodox procedures of modern medicine seemed to have deprived me and thousands of others like me. Under circumstances like this, it's difficult to be rational. I was certainly looking for someone to blame. At the same time, I realized how defenseless I would be if I just went ahead with Plan B and found my own supply of interferon.

A doctor friend who had read all the material I had gathered agreed to give me the shots. Presumably I could get hold of some material in Florida or Europe. But what kind of material? I would have to protect myself from meningitis and God knows what else, and also protect myself financially. I called Merigan and asked if he would run captured stuff through his labs. "Oh," he said, without much surprise, "you're in touch with the 'offshore clinics,' are you?" Then he said it would be better for a lab accepting government funding not to get involved. There were independent labs that assay interferon. He gave me a couple of names but made it clear that he didn't approve of the direction I was taking.

So I asked him how the current system of controls could be rationalized to people like me, who need a drug and cannot get access to it. He answered, "We look at laetrile, and the fact that clinics in Mexico are organized to take advantage of the differences between their laws and ours, and we see how people are urged to put their houses in hock for a drug that, when tested in this country in double-blinded trials, shows no efficacy at all."

But surely interferon cannot be compared to laetrile. I asked Merigan if Jacobs's study did not deserve to be taken seriously. "Except," he said, "that it's not acceptable for licensing." Echoing what Colby had told me, he described it as "a preliminary study that shows there needs to be further work." All this was making me wonder whether American medicine wasn't being slowly strangled by its own

methodology of proof. Merigan strongly disagreed, and explained the reasoning behind the policies.

"Our laws do much more good than they do harm," he said. "When you've got a drug that needs to be applied to several thousand people, you want an adequate test because there are going to be fads —and MS has fads in spades. There must be one a year." But if my doctor, who knows my case and in whom I have put my trust, agrees to administer an investigational new drug, haven't I the right to receive it? Merigan said no. He said that individual exceptions lead to anarchy, that a patient who becomes his own doctor might "fall prey to exploiters." He might also, said Merigan, "be led away from conventional therapy and become the victim of side effects due to the agent, which will make his life even less tolerable, without advantage to him."

With Merigan's words ringing in my head, I dialed the first Miami number, to make my first sortie into the less official realms of medical research. A woman answered, "Automated Labs." I firmly said I was looking for fifty million units of fibroblast interferon of at least one percent purity. Jacobs had given his patients 1.5 million units per injection twice weekly for a month and thereafter a million units once a month for five more, making a total of seventeen million units. Fifty million units would be more than enough. I had no idea what the cost would be.

"I don't believe we have any fibroblast experience in stock." The woman had difficulty with "fibroblast." She sounded Cuban. "Dr. Canales and Dr. Warren are out of the country for a meeting today," she went on. "They'll be back tomorrow. I'll get them to call you."

Dr. Warren called back the following day. I told him I wanted to duplicate the Jacobs study with fibroblast interferon injected intrathecally. He said they were producing leukocytes, not fibroblast, and that the drug was injected intramuscularly. The intramuscular approach was "a helluva lot safer" than the intrathecal, he said. Intrathecal injections would have to be done in a hospital, and that would mean obtaining an IND number from the FDA, which in turn would require "somebody putting up millions of dollars and filling in a stack of forms two feet high. We use exactly the same procedure Jacobs used," he said, "only we use leukocyte interferon injected intramuscularly." I wondered if he was this precise in other respects.

Warren said that there must be liaison between my doctor and him, and I should make a thorough examination of the facts before I embarked on any program. Should I choose the safer approach he recommended, I would need to be in Miami for an initial two months but then could go home and administer the shots to myself. He said that in most jurisdictions this would be considered legal.

Warren told me that his interferon was high quality. "I make it myself," he said, adding, "and because I make it myself, I'm allowed to give it to my own patients with no problem." He said he could not let another doctor have it. As for the cost, for the first time I heard figures quoted. Warren estimated "somewhere around four to five hundred dollars per injection." (That works out to fifty dollars per million units, about ten dollars more than the going market price to researchers that I have found quoted in *Genetic Engineering News*.) "It's expensive material," Warren said. "There's no two ways about it."

He suggested ten million units twice a week ($1,000) for the first six weeks and beyond that, one injection ($500) a week for as long as it seemed necessary to maintain a level, as he put it. Perhaps it might be less. Although he stressed that the treatment was private, he said the data was collected for Automated Labs' own in-house study and then usually published in scientific and medical journals to contribute to the national pool of information.

I asked what sort of purity he thought his interferon had.

"Oh, no," he replied. "It isn't what we *think* we've got. We *know* the purity we've got, because all our stuff is analyzed. It meets all FDA standards for purity."

I said I'd call him back and dialed the second number. A Ralph Rosenberg answered. He said he represented "Intercare," and gave me the name of a man to call in Munich. Provided I had a doctor willing to prescribe interferon for research purposes, this man, Rosenberg said, would supply it. He thought it would travel. He'd seen material stored on ice for months that still retained potency. I asked if the Munich clinic would replicate Jacobs's intrathecal approach. Rosenberg said he would find out.

Before he did, a friend sent me an article from the *Sunday Times* (London), dated November 8, 1981, entitled CASHING IN ON CANCER. Rosenberg was pictured beside a man the paper identified as his partner in Intercare, Allan Isen. Isen, the paper claimed, offered cancer patients interferon treatment for $50,000. He had contacted two clinics in Europe, promising them patients and interferon. Then about 2,400 Florida M.D.s had been approached by Isen's "program coordinator," Dr. Tom Carroll, and offered this service. Cost of the European therapy would be $30,000, follow-up care in the U.S. a further $20,000. No doctors responded.

A series of ads were run across the country. Merigan subsequently read me one from the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s business section in March 1981. The ad read, "Interferon Treatment for Cancer: U.S. cancer victims can now get interferon in Europe. . . ." According to the *Sunday Times*, only a hundred people answered these ads. All but seven were turned down, not on health grounds but because they didn't have the money.

The article had mentioned a clinic called the San Rocco, in northern Italy. Isen allegedly obtained the interferon he sent to this clinic from Life Sciences, Inc., in St. Petersburg, Florida. The cost of the ma-

terial to him was $3,150 per patient, said the *Sunday Times*. But the patient was to be charged $50,000 all the same.

I wrote to the Italian clinic. The medical director, Dr. Pontiggia, replied, saying he was an oncologist (tumor specialist) and would not attempt to replicate the Jacobs treatment.

Now I finally arranged to see Jacobs. I had twice spoken to him at length on the telephone; we had got on well enough and he had invited me to Buffalo, but I hadn't been sure how to approach the visit. After all, I didn't expect to be invited to join a trial. But for several reasons, not least because I am a reporter, I wanted to get an idea of what Jacobs felt, *intuitively*, and that was best done in person. I really wanted to meet him. By now I was enjoying all the enthusiasm and optimism of this peculiar micromedical world I had entered.

We flew to Buffalo, a dying city whose life has been siphoned off in the migration to the Sunbelt. The Millard Fillmore Hospital was built when the town boomed. It was built of brick to last forever. Harry Dent, an industrialist who died of Parkinson's disease, left his fortune to neurological research through the Dent Institute. It is a stylish annex to the old hospital, more reminiscent of Cedars Sinai in Los Angeles, with tinted glass and wall-to-wall carpeting in designer colors. There are six neurologists and two neurosurgeons. All do at least some clinical research.

Dr. Lawrence Jacobs had just come from playing squash. He is a slim middle-aged man, vigorous and enthusiastic. He did his neurology training and a special fellowship in neuroophthalmology at Mount Sinai in New York before coming to the Dent Institute in 1973. His specialty now is the application of the C. T. scanner (known as the CAT scanner) to neuroophthalmology. Many MS patients have eye problems, and since the CAT scanner is used in diagnosis of visual problems, Jacobs accumulated a large population of MS patients whose symptoms he followed on a routine basis. About four years ago, scientists from Roswell Park Memorial Institute, across the way from the Millard Fillmore, approached him. They said that Dr. Julius Horoszewicz had "some very high-quality beta [human fibroblast] interferon," Jacobs said. "We discussed how it might be used in certain neurologic diseases, and we settled for MS. It was just the serendipity, you see, of my having a large population of MS patients and their having a very high-quality interferon."

By this time, the questions I had for Jacobs were well formulated. Why the intrathecal rather than the systemic intramuscular approach? Jacobs seems to have been mostly concerned with delivering the stuff directly to the area where it would do the most good. He said the central nervous system—the target of MS—is separated from the rest of the body and its circulation by a blood-brain barrier that is permeable only to some substances injected into the blood or muscle, and that interferon does not seem to be one of those substances. So to give the drug intravenously or intramuscularly was not the most reliable way of getting it to where it was needed. Thus the logic for administering it directly into the cerebro-spinal fluid that directly bathes the brain and spinal cord.

I said some people had wondered how safe this was. Jacobs said that two children with central-nervous-system leukemia had been treated intrathecally at Roswell Park with the very same beta interferon. "These kiddies went to autopsy and no undue side effects from the interferon were observed." The eager talk of researchers like Jacobs is sometimes unnerving.

Nor did Jacobs observe any lasting side effects among the recipients during the trial. There were short-term fevers and headaches, and elevated cellular and protein levels in the spinal fluid. Nevertheless, these side effects alone made Jacobs shy away from blinding or double-blinding his trial, since he would have had to administer placebos that caused the same symptoms, and that might endanger his patients' health. How could it be justifiable to inflict side effects, and maybe lasting damage, on sick patients without even giving them the chance to benefit from interferon?

Jacobs said he had known that other researchers would criticize his procedures, but, he told me, "To tell you the truth, I still have trouble with the idea. Maybe getting the answer makes blinding morally justifiable," he said, "but I take care of these patients. I have a great affection for them. One wants to be a very, very good investigator and I try to be, but these are not monkeys and kittens we're dealing with." I told him that whenever I got any kind of fever, my other symptoms would immediately get worse. Jacobs said emphatically, "That's right. But when these people—the recipients—got fevers from the *interferon*, they didn't get worse . . ."

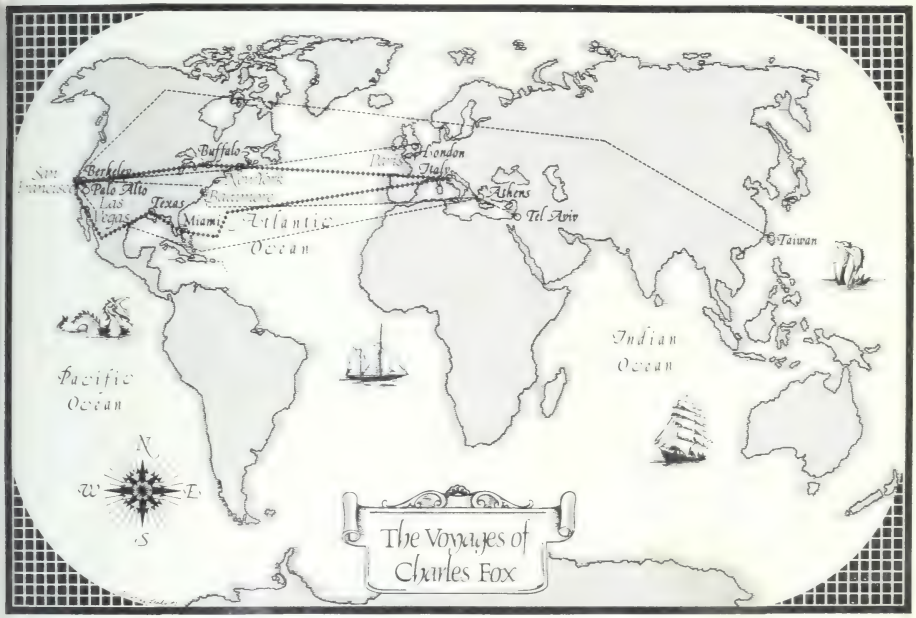
Jacobs's information was cheap by any standards. His first trial with the Roswell Park interferon was done for $50,000. I knew that the National MS Society, for example, had spent $900,000 on Cantell interferon from Finland for its twenty-four-patient, three-year double-blind study. (Cantell interferon is the original leukocyte material, made in Helsinki from human blood, before any other production method was discovered. It took about 40,000 pints to gather enough interferon to treat one cancer patient.) Jacobs explained how he had undertaken his study. He assembled his twenty patients and tossed a coin to see who would get interferon first and who would be "controls." Then the two groups posed separately for black-and-white photographs he showed us. They smiled for the camera. The majority were young women. One or two stood unaided. One man

in a wheelchair was a judge, Jacobs said. This man had had the disease longer than any, nearly twenty years. A younger man stood at the back with his arms folded across his chest. I found it faintly shocking to see their faces. I don't care to consort with others who have the disease. It is enough to know it from within.

This random selection produced ten recipients who, taken together, had experienced a much higher rate of exacerbations than the controls. In other words, as a group they were less stable and tended to have more frequent attacks. The MS Society criticized the trial for this, saying that in fact only five out of the ten people who were getting interferon accurately matched five controls and therefore the trial was effectively only five and five. But Jacobs said this discrepancy finally made the experiment more convincing, when the people who were getting interferon still ended up with a far lower exacerbation rate than those who weren't, despite their past record. Over the eighteen-month period of the first trials, only two out of the ten recipients experienced any exacerbations at all. "In June," he said, "when the groups switch and the controls start getting the interferon, then we will really begin to tell."

Still, I wanted to know if Jacobs, in sidestepping the double blind, could be said to have failed as a true, hairy-chested researcher. I couldn't shake the memory of Merigan sitting in his office, searching the air for ways to explain his unease with the methods Jacobs had used. But I also remembered the words of another established clinical researcher of interferon, oncologist Jordan Gutterman of the M. D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute of the University of Texas. It was Gutterman who persuaded the American Cancer Society to put up $2 million for research in September 1978, and who thereby attracted the attention of the gene splicers and triggered the vast investment required to clone the material. Gutterman is currently the only researcher working with FDA-approved gamma interferon. He had come down hard on the side of Jacobs. For one thing, "a double-blind study with interferon is fooling no one," he says, "because you can almost always tell who's getting interferon. Neither patient nor doctor could possibly not know."

Later on I had also spoken with Dr. Hillel Panitch, associate professor of neurology at the University of California in San Francisco. Panitch is conducting another segment of the double-blind trial with which Merigan is involved. I asked him, too, if it was possible to keep patients from knowing



Kristina Leahy

---------- *1972: The author's quest for treatment from the time of diagnosis.*

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whether they were getting interferon or a placebo. "Some patients have side effects that make it pretty obvious what they're on," he admitted.

When Jacobs showed us around the clinic, he introduced us to Dr. Judith O'Malley, who assayed his patients' interferon levels. She said gently, "Interferon's not difficult to make. I could teach you in a couple of weeks. I'm making immune [gamma] interferon at the moment. That's more difficult. It's very unstable. You make some up and refrigerate it and after two weeks half of it has vanished."

Jacobs showed me a film he had made of recipient No. Two, a small young woman who was shown undergoing an acute exacerbation—having a very unpleasant attack. Filmed close up, her left eyeball fluttered like a butterfly wing, or, as Jacobs had it, "beat in a vigorous nystagmus," when she looked all the way to the left. The movement was so violent it made her nauseous and she dropped her head. She looked pale and rather frightened. This was on the sixth day of exacerbation. Now Jacobs did a sham lumbar puncture. Two days later she was refilmed: the eye still beat. This time Jacobs injected 950,000 units of interferon intrathecally. Six hours later he called. Her husband woke her at Jacobs's request. She had gone to sleep, feeling sick from the interferon. The nystagmus had disappeared. Now we saw her two days later. The eye was normal. "I examined her yesterday," Jacobs said, "and do you know what? She has gone seven weeks without a recurrence."

He paused. "I find the evidence extremely compelling."

"And how might the interferon be involved?" I asked. "Well," he said, "there is evidence to show it enhances the excitability of neurons." In other words, it may sometimes even improve symptoms. "We shall examine this in our next study," he said. His words were deliberate, but his tone was amazed. "I'll tell you, I'm from Kansas," he said. "It takes a lot to convince me of anything. But I think we've got a tiger by the tail here."

So we flew home, Brooke and I, with all I had heard over the last four months flying around inside my head. Intrathecal, intramuscular, the arguments are all academic to me. One thing I've learned in this investigation: on the outside the hospital is uniformly brick, but on the inside it is uniformly human. Therefore, among those who can help there are those who will, and I must seek them out and enlist their aid in a one-man pilot study—which is, after all, what any patient embarks on with any doctor—attempting to duplicate the Jacobs findings.

It has been two and a half years since Jacobs began treating. The eight out of ten recipients who benefited remain benefited. By almost a thousand days. It has been twenty-five years now since interferon was first discovered at work within the body, and I have heard no mention of its doing harm. I have heard of people tolerating forty-million-unit doses without ill effects and of tumors being reduced by dosages as small as one hundred thousand units. Such an extraordinary range is extremely significant. As Colby points out, when you're treating with a poison, such as chemotherapy, you need rigorous controls or you will "massively insult and possibly lose" the patient. It was for chemical medicine that our current methodology of proof was devised. But we are not dealing with chemistry when we talk about interferon and recombinant-DNA material. We're talking about biology. It's a different order and it demands a different methodology. Current methodology, rigorously applied, is as antiquated as warships are in an age of smart missiles. We are, truly, in a new age.

It's going to take time for the ponderous medical bureaucracy and the attitudes it has engendered over several generations to change, to catch up with science. Many of us don't have that time. But there is the money, there is the material, there is the knowledge, and there is enough public evidence to satisfy me. If the evidence doesn't convince the doctors in control, what do I care for their convictions any longer? They are not the ones being slowly destroyed in the presence of those who love them; they do not endure even what those onlookers endure.

Today, the day before the deadline for this piece and six months after I began, I called Jim Johnston, a thirty-nine-year-old schoolteacher from Petaluma, just north of here. Johnston is a patient in the MS Society's double-blind study. He has had MS for six years. His wife, Maryjane, is an emergency-room nurse.

"The double-blind part was kind of a joke," Johnston said. "It was obvious I was getting interferon, from the side effects." However, the interferon itself, a human growth leukocyte, was no joke. Maryjane injected her husband daily and the stuff devastated him. He lay most of the day on his bed, exhausted. He developed sores in his mouth that would not heal. His wife persuaded him to stay in the study only with great difficulty.

Johnston had no exacerbations while he was taking the interferon or in the six-month observation period that followed. Then began the sham of daily injections of placebo. And one brief flare-up of symptoms. "We kept it up," Maryjane said, "because we had agreed to and because there has to be some system."

Of course there does, and I wish I could suggest some constructive formula that would elegantly couple progress and regulation and give our method of proof the sensitivity to calculate risk and benefit. Instead, I simply hope that my most self-interested inquiry will at least attest to the need—and I continue to be grateful to guinea pig Johnston and the others for their courage and perseverance. ■

Reaction



Just when you were thinking that *Sensibility* had entirely atrophied in the young.....



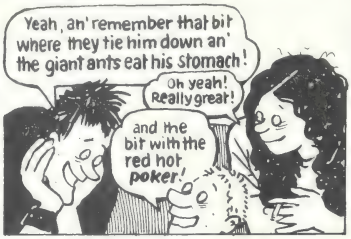
(*Remembering that these are the same little chicks who once wept at "Mary Poppins"...*



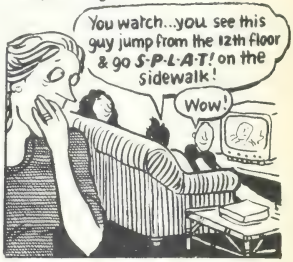
...who were unconsolable when the gerbils died....



...but who are now the unflinching connoisseurs of all **Horror, Torture, Carnage...**)



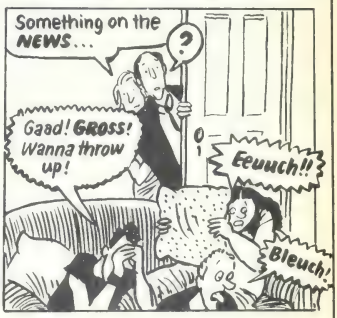
...Just when you were <u>really</u> despairing.....

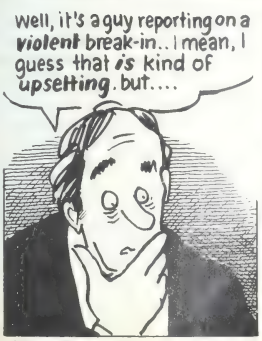


...they reveal an underlayer of *délicatesse*:













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SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS GOES TO THE ZOO

It's dog eat dog among the animals in Cairo.

by J. C. Suares

WHAT worthless son-of-a-bitch put a polar bear in the Cairo zoo? The miserable 600-pound beast that used to roam the ice floes of the Arctic has been confined to a twelve-foot-by-eight-foot cement cage for more than ten years. Lead, carbon monoxide, organophosphates, and chlorinated hydrocarbons (from insecticides) in the stifling air of the most polluted city in North Africa have turned his coat from shiny white to cadmium yellow. The beast's retinas are also covered with this yellowish film, making it nearly blind. It spends a great deal of time bobbing its head from side to side in silence as if rocking to the beat of a faraway melody.

But the polar bear is one of the main attractions in this zoo, a really droll creature that can stand on its hind legs on command and emit loud, murderous howls that scare the wits out of little Cairo schoolchildren. Ahmed, the bear's keeper, spends ten hours a day, seven days a week, watching over his performer. He charges twenty-five piastres every time someone asks to see the beast stand on its hind legs and howl. He charges ten piastres for his other performer, a ten-year-old brown bear from India with a coat in bad need of dry-cleaning. This bear stands on its hind legs and permits Ahmed to throw handfuls of carrots straight into its throat in order to delight the crowd, a mixture of Arab tourists, workers with their families on holiday, and scores of unemployed young men passing time.

The Ministry of Agriculture, which has operated the zoo since it opened in the 1890s, has to feed a million new Egyptians every ten months. This has led to severe budget cuts for the zoo in recent years. All maintenance work on the footpaths, man-made streams, iron bridges, flower beds, exotic trees, and cages stopped long ago. There are no more flowers in the zoo. The tropical trees, the ones that can survive the brutal Egyptian heat, are covered with that same yellow coat of chemicals, thanks to over one million registered vehicles on thousands of miles of busy streets surrounding the zoo.

J. C. Suares is a writer and illustrator.

BUT IF Cairo is choking on its own uncontrollable baby boom, runaway inflation, massive unemployment, and devastating pollution, the Cairo zoo is thriving. It is a monument to private enterprise. A few savvy zoo keepers have subdivided the ruins into a series of small private operations ranging from entertaining animal acts to freak shows, breeding farms, ivory trade, and the only baby-animal exchange operation in the free world. The zoo has taken on a no-nonsense business atmosphere, where there is no room for deadbeats. To get any attention here, an animal has to know a trick or be droll. Otherwise it is neglected and eventually disappears to make room for a more useful creature that can pay its own way.

The winners are the zoo keepers, of course, and the droll animals that perform. The lions and tigers who growl on command, the giraffes who pick carrots from your hand, the elephants who grab peanut after peanut with their trunks as if the world were running out of them, and the blind polar bear with the murderous howl.

Doomed are the animals and birds who don't know and can't be taught tricks. They include several pairs of violent-tempered baboons in dark, circular cages, a dozen African wild asses, a few impalas, a couple of von der Decken's hornbills, several pairs of Fisher's lovebirds, African eagles, Egyptian vultures, and a lone secretary bird, a lanky, four-foot creature with large, intense eyes and feathers growing in all directions that trots back and forth

across the length of its cage like an anarchist waiting for a bomb to go off. The losers are unattended and their cages neglected.

The lion and tiger cages are supervised by Mustapha. He charges ten piastres to see the huge Bengal tiger in the back and another ten piastres to touch it. For yet another ten piastres, he'll make the cat roar for you. If you feel like splurging, ask to see the newborn lion cub (fifty piastres). You might even hold it for a few minutes (five pounds). But if you would like to have it delivered to your house some evening, be prepared to dish out about 250 big ones. And don't worry about decimating the zoo's lion population. On the contrary, happy lions make it twenty times a day, and Mustapha has got 'em all screwing.

Ahmed, Mustapha, and the few lucky keepers with talented animals guard their concessions with fierce jealousy. This has forced the others to come up with enterprising new schemes. For example, a couple of years ago, several cages that had been sitting empty for a few months were suddenly teeming with activity. Several breeding pairs of ordinary pigeons, a staple of classical Egyptian cooking, appeared. It was the beginning of what has become one of the most profitable concessions in the zoo. The cages are now filled with plump pigeons sitting shoulder to shoulder on perches, waiting for someone to take them home to roast.

Several years ago the lone rhinoceros in the zoo developed a tumor on his rump. The tumor grew to unusual proportions and finally fell off, leaving a large gaping wound, which is periodically anointed with mercurochrome. A visiting dignitary from North Yemen, Egypt's good ally, has offered a thousand pounds for the rhino's horn when the animal kicks off. The rhinoceros now stands immobile in the middle of the cage, head down, as if trying to nurse a monumental hangover. He might pass on anytime, so the keeper and his friends wait in the bushes next to the cage, eating fried chicken, playing cards, and waiting to claim the horn.

Cairo probably enjoys one of the world's largest populations of stray animals. You see it as soon as you've landed at the airport, where a large family of cats live among the luggage and the freight. You'll notice hundreds of a peculiar kind of stray dog outside the city, especially around the Pyramids and the Sphinx. With their long snouts and large, erect ears, they resemble jackals. They're graceful and have an air of mystery about them, like their forefathers on ancient wall paintings.

A large, arrogant community of cats has taken up residence in the zoo. They live in some of the abandoned cages and pens, have families, and spend the day sunbathing or playing. They've learned the feeding schedules and move from area to area, following the keepers who distribute buckets of fish to the pelicans or meat to the leopards or dead mice to the owls and vultures. The cats wait patiently for leftovers, but I caught a couple stealing fish straight from the buckets.

Several cats live in the peacock shed, which is in the middle of the peacock cage. The peacocks pay no attention to the cats, and the cats, in turn, seem to mind their own business. I could only deduce that the cats liked looking at the peacocks.

AFTER my first visit, I returned to the zoo with a government official who I hoped could be bullied into some kind of help for the neglected beasts. I pointed out that if the minister of agriculture could do for the zoo what the minister of culture has done for the Cairo Museum, the future would look very bright. The Cairo Museum is a model of efficiency: no sleeping guards, no artifacts disappearing in the middle of the night, no visitors getting hassled. My host listened attentively and then agreed to follow me on a cage-by-cage tour of the zoo. The first stop was the Thompson's gazelles, where I was hoping to point out that the gazelles have no place to hide from the sun. But before I could say a word, and to my astonishment, the official raised his hands into a rifle-aiming position and let out a large "BAM!" from his lips. Then he aimed at another animal and let out another "BAM!" He turned to me and announced that he had killed a couple of them just a few weeks ago in the desert. When we got to a cage with small desert cats in it, he repeated the whole pantomime, this time informing me that he had killed one of them just the week before. He repeated the same gestures at the next cage, the Egyptian hawks, this time aiming, firing, reloading, aiming, firing, reloading, and firing over and over again in what must have been one of the bloodiest carnages in the annals of hunting. I put an end to our stroll and returned to the waiting limousine as quickly as possible. My fear was that he would discover some rare animal that he hadn't shot, and resolve to find one and kill it.

I shared a ride back to the airport with an Egyptian air force pilot, a calm and studious man who seemed to go through life very cautiously, despite his profession. The conversation covered some of the airplanes he had tested (the Russian planes are always breaking down, the American planes are too complicated, the Chinese planes are worthless, and the French planes are too slow) and eventually drifted toward my favorite subject, the Cairo zoo. I hoped to arouse his interest in the subject, even to drive him to anger and outrage so that he would tell his friends, who would tell their friends, who would write to the daily newspaper *Al-Ahram* to denounce the zoo and the way it is run. But the subject didn't touch him. Only when I told him that certain animals seemed to be for sale did his eyes light up. I think that he was seriously considering investing in a lion cub. ■

A TOMB WITH A VIEW

A story.

by Paul Theroux



"THERE'S another woman to see you," my secretary said, giving me an old-fashioned look on "another."

It had been a bad morning—I knew she was thinking about Mr. Fleamarsh's ashes. Mrs. Fleamarsh had come in a few days before. Her husband had complained of chest pains on the train to Salisbury, missed the cathedral, collapsed on the bus, and died at Stonehenge. She insisted on having him cremated, so that she could carry him in her handbag. Is there a more presumptuous statement than "He would have wanted it this way"? Accompanying his coffin back to Baltimore would have meant her missing the tour of the Lake District, and Stratford was tomorrow. Mrs. Fleamarsh gave me to understand that a whole, unburnt, adult human corpse was a terribly inconvenient thing. "He bowled a lot," she said, as if this was all the explanation I needed. And, even more obscurely, "He always had one of those shiny blue jackets."

I arranged for the cremation, but as Mrs. Fleamarsh was in Stratford, the ashes were delivered to me at the embassy. The urn, the size and shape of a white crock of Gentleman's Relish, stood on my desk for most of the afternoon. And it put me in the mood for what happened later that day, though I would willingly have missed it all—Mrs. Fleamarsh, the ashes of her husband, and Miss Gowrie and her dark lodger.

Miss Gowrie, the other woman—she had watery eyes and a wind-reddened face—introduced herself as a friend of Sir Charles Smallwood, whom I dimly remembered having met at Horton's reception. Miss Gowrie, I guessed, was nearing seventy. She sat down and planted both her feet on the carpet to steady herself, and began squashing her handbag in her lap.

She said, "I'm afraid I have rather a shocking story to tell you. I mentioned it to Charlie"—this was the way she referred to Sir Charles Smallwood—"and he said I should come straight to you."

I thought she was a bit drunk or having trouble with her dentures. In fact, she was straining to speak in a dignified way—she was fighting her cockney accent and losing. She had a voice of astounding monotony.

I said, "Go on."

"Well"—*wayew*—"it's about my lodger, isn't it?"

She looked around the office, she peered at the walls, she spoke again. She was one of those people who seem—in the way they whisper and squint—to be addressing eavesdroppers.

"Mind you, I'm not really a landlady in the normal way. It's just that I live in Mortlake and the Council put up me rates, didn't they? Practically doubled them. I had to take in lodgers to pay the additional. That's Mr. Wubb. Colored."

"What color, Miss Gowrie?"

"There's only one color," she said. "Black. One of yours."

I tried to convey, with silence and cold eyes, that I did not like this at all.

"And that's why I'm here," she said.

"Because your lodger is black?"

"Because he's a thief." Feef was what she said.

"British?"

"Of course not."

"Before you go any further, I think I should remind you that this is the American embassy," I said. "Properly speaking, if you have a problem with your lodger you should go to the police."

"He's one of yours," she repeated. "American. And he's driving me mental. It's not fair!"

"How do you know he's a thief?"

"He keeps the rubbish under his bed, don't he?"

"Rubbish?"

"Rubbish is what he steals—pots and pans and that. He's driving me mental."

As she spoke, I resolved to check the man's citizenship. I didn't like Miss Gowrie's manner. She behaved as if she were holding me responsible for this thieving lodger. I hoped I could get rid of her without becoming involved in her problem. I had had enough that day dealing with the ashes of Herbert Fleamarsh. The worst problems in any office arise at roughly four in the afternoon. It was fourteen, and I wished I had gone home early.

Paul Theroux lives in London. His most recent novel, The Mosquito Coast, *was published by Houghton Mifflin last spring.*

"Mr. Wubb has no right whatsoever to come here and steal from people. Some college student! I suppose he's studying how to steal. Why don't he stay in his own country and steal?"

"That's a good question," I said, picking up the telephone. "Let's see if the police have an answer to it."

"Oh, please, sir!" she said, and her fear brought forth a terrible tone of respectfulness, almost of groveling. She looked suddenly frightened and small, and I felt genuinely sorry for her. "Please don't tell them. It would be in all the papers. There'd be talk. It would kill me."

"That you had a dishonest lodger?"

"That I had a flaming lodger at all," she said. "I don't want the rest of them to know."

"The rest?"

"The street," she said. "They don't take lodgers, certainly not black ones. They're awfully decent."

She was asking me to agree with her. I said nothing.

"He's one of yours," she said. "You'll know what to do."

But he wasn't, and I didn't.

IT SEEMED no business of ours, this light-fingered lodger who might or might not be an American. I checked the files. There was no one named Wubb registered with the embassy—but not every American registered, and would a thief? Miss Gowrie telephoned me the next afternoon. She was desperate, and I had a free evening: the combination often ends badly. But I liked the idea of going upriver to Mortlake, so I visited her, just to look around, and perhaps to find excuses for my curiosity.

"He's rearranged all his furniture, hasn't he?" Miss Gowrie said, letting me into the tall, gloomy house. It was just off the Mortlake Road, which ran along the river, and the river could be seen—we were mounting the steps to the lodger's room—from Miss Gowrie's upper windows. On this wet black afternoon the river's dampness seemed to penetrate every brick of the house, and the trees dripped gray water from the tips of their bony branches. "In his room," she said. "He's moved everything, every stick."

She threw his door open, releasing mingled smells, sweet and sour. Miss Gowrie saw me sniffing.

"He does all his own cooking," she said. "That pong is all his. It hums sometimes."

I looked around the room and then turned to Miss Gowrie and said, "Tell me, does your lodger have a small bump or bruise—a little swelling, say—right here on his upper forehead?"

"Yes—you've *seen* him," she cried.

"Does he often wake you up in the middle of the night, padding around?"

"All the time! Gives me a fright sometimes. How do you know about his bruise?"

"And have you noticed that he cooks at night—only at night—not during the day?"

"Yes!" she said and clawed her hair straight.

"Your lodger is a very devout Muslim," I said.

"Mussulman?" she said, saying it like "muscleman," and frowning. "I don't know about that. And as for devout—"



"Oh, yes," I said. "Muslim certainly, because he rearranged the furniture so that he could face Mecca—over there."

Miss Gowrie peered in the direction of Mecca, and, seeing only Barnes Common, made a face.

"—and taken down those pictures," I said, examining a pair of framed prints stacked to face the wall: two busty ladies in black lace. "They hate pictures of human beings."

"Spanish," Miss Gowrie said. "They're the same as blacks!"

Andrzej Dudzinski

"Here's his prayer mat," I said. "And he must be devout because he has a prayer bump on his forehead. The bruise—you've seen it. Also, if he wakes you up at night, he must be saying his prayers five times a day. They bump their heads when they pray."

"He might not be praying—he might be cooking."

"Of course. Because this is the Muslim period of Ramadan. It's like Lent, and it goes on until the end of next month. He can't eat or drink anything until sundown. That's why he eats at, ah"—I had seen a small valise under the bed, and its luggage tag—"Abdul Wahab Bin Baz. That explains it."

Instead of looking relieved, Miss Gowrie had become progressively worried by the information I had given her. And then she said, "Ain't you glad you come over?"

"Miss Gowrie, he's not one of ours," I said.

"He's black," she said.

"Arab." The Saudi Airlines luggage tag said everything: he was a Wahabi, he had flown from Mecca to London. A fanatical traveler?

"Don't split hairs," she said, and flung herself at me. She grasped my arm and exhaled the smell of bread and fish paste.

"You know these people and their funny ways. You can help me. You're the only one who can. The police don't know about prayer bumps and eating after sundown, do they?"

Instead of agreeing, I asked her where her lodger was.

"College," she said. "It's a sort of night school. He goes out about six and comes back at nine. That's when he starts eating."

"And praying, presumably."

"I wouldn't know about that," Miss Gowrie said. "During the day he just frowsts in here. Studies and that. He's a great reader. Mad about history. That's what he told me. That's all he told me."

"How long has he lived with you?"

"Two weeks. I only discovered he was pinching things two days ago. He must have been at it all last week. I thought then, out you go! But I reckoned he might be dangerous, him being a thief. That's why I called Charlie Smallwood, and he give me your name. You'd know what to do—that's what he told me. Only I wish you'd do it."

"Let's have a look at his loot," I said.

Miss Gowrie got slowly to her knees, saying, "I used to have a proper charlady—I used to have staff," and went on to say that she had discovered her lodger's thievery while she was cleaning out his room. It was under the bed, in a couple of cardboard boxes. She brought out the boxes, spitting with effort as she did so, and showed me the oddest collection of stolen goods I had ever seen.

There were two brass incense burners, properly called thuribles—they could have been a hundred years old. There was a brass lamp of oriental design and a pair of brass candlesticks. There was a metal crucifix and, lastly, a string of about twenty bells—round ones, about the size of golf balls, with a slit in each one. I had never seen any bells like this.

Everything was thick with dust and coated with a kind of sour, damp rind, as if it had lain on the floor of an underground cave. "You think it's junk," Miss Gowrie said, "then you look closer and you realize it might be valuable. A little Brasso and a dry rag—come up a treat. But if you get very close, it looks like junk again, and that's what it is. So why go to the police? All they're going to do is laugh and say, 'Steady on, love.' They won't treat it as a serious matter. But they don't have to live here, do they?"

"Maybe it's not serious," I said.

"You're joking," she said. "This is diabolical. You don't get this in shops or houses. This ain't the kind of thing that fell off the back of a lorry. Go on, touch it."

I took one of the bells and shook it. It had a dull sound, and no vibration—about as musical as a pebble hitting a coffin.

"Creepy, isn't it? Like from a church. I tell you, some of this stuff gives me the collywobbles."



I KNEW what she meant. They weren't the sort of things that anyone would steal, and yet where could you buy them? So they had to be stolen, probably from a church, from a derelict altar—a Muslim fanatic might do that. But what about those little round bells?

It was too late to do anything that day. I left Miss Gowrie with a promise that I would try to get to the bottom of it, and the next morning, with the aid of a good map, made a list of all the churches near her Mortlake house. There were seven. My secretary phoned each one and asked whether anything had been stolen from them. All had been burgled, but not within the previous two weeks. We tried a dozen more nearby churches: no luck.

I was still not satisfied and so, that same afternoon, I went to the three churches nearest Miss Gowrie's. The Anglican church and Methodist chapel were both securely locked, but the Catholic church was open. I walked through it and into the deep grass of the churchyard.

"Can I help you?" It was a man with a broom, probably the caretaker, but he was suspicious of me and held his broom with the handle forward, like a weapon.

"Hello," I said brightly, to calm him. "Are you missing anything from the church—anything stolen? I'm thinking of things like candlesticks or crucifixes."

"Not that I know of," he said, and yet he had an undecided look. He wanted to say more—he had something on his mind.

I said, "You're very lucky then," to give him an opening.

"Not really," he said. "We've lost most of our outside lights—vandals. They broke every blooming one of them."

He showed me that all the floodlights in the churchyard had been broken, and as it was also a graveyard, the effect, on this gray afternoon, was somber, a sort of bleak and muffled violence.

"I'm amazed they could have broken lights that high," I said. The spotlights were attached to the eaves of the church, thirty feet up.

"They're savages," he said. "They use pellets, slingshots, blowpipes."

"Did you see them do it?"

"No, and I'll tell you something else," he said. "I've worked here at St. Mary Magdalene's for twenty-two years, and it's the first time this has happened. The past two weeks have been terrible. Broken glass everywhere. It's so dark at night!"

"Two weeks?" I said, and thought of Mr. Wahab.

"The first week was shocking. But this week hasn't been so bad. There's no more lights to break!" He looked at me in a disgusted way and said, "You're an American, aren't you?" I told him I was.

"You're used to this sort of thing—vandals, villains, queue-jumpers, law-breakers. But this isn't New York or Chicago. This is the quietest part of London. People behave themselves here. At least, they used to."

We stood in darkness, because of the smashed lights. But this was the early daytime dark of November: it was not yet five o'clock. I decided to stop by the embassy before I went home.

I was at my desk, wondering whether to call Miss Gowrie to tell her I had found out nothing, when my colleague Vic Scaduto appeared. Seeing me examining one of the strange round bells that the lodger had stolen, Scaduto said, "You've got the craziest things in your office. Last time I was here there was a funeral urn with a tourist's ashes in your pending tray. And now you're playing with a camel bell!"

"How do you know that's a camel bell?"

"Used to see them in India. Place is full of camels. My kids bought bells like that at the bazaar. They're sort of ceremonial—they loop strings of them around a camel's neck."

I said, "Can you think of any reason why you might find a camel bell like this in an English church?"

"I love it!" he said, and left my office, snickering.

Just before I went home, the phone rang. It was Miss Gowrie.

"Can you come over straight away?" she breathed. "He's just gone out."

"Is there anything wrong?"

She said, "There's another parcel, isn't there? He brought it back last night then, didn't he? The dirty devil!"

"Don't open it. Don't touch it. I'll be right over."

She was waiting for me by the door, her hands knotted in her apron. She told me to hurry, and started upstairs. Twice she called him a *dir'ee devoo* —"And he might be back any minute."

Mr. Wahab's room was the same as before—very neat, the prayer mat facing Barnes Common and Mecca, a slight aroma of stale spice in the air, the pictures turned to the wall. After Miss Gowrie unlocked it, she stepped into the hallway to stand sentry duty while I opened the parcel under the bed.



It was a pillowcase, its top twisted and held fast with a length of wire. It gave off the same dusty underground odor as the candlesticks and the crucifix and the camel bells. It seemed to contain sticks of wood and broken pottery wrapped in newspaper. I removed them and saw at once that they were bones—old, yellow, spongy, woody bones—and the cracked bowl of a skull, and a jawbone, and a number of loose human teeth.

"More of the same," I said, so as not to frighten her. And I wrapped them and returned them to the

innocent-looking pillowcase.

"You'll help me, won't you?"

"I'll do my best," I said.

I was relieved that she had not seen the contents of that new parcel, for I had always thought of myself as being fairly unshockable, and yet when I remembered those yellow bones and teeth and incense burners and camel bells under the bed of the Arab in that wet suburb of London, I got the shudders.



It was no longer a trivial, speculative matter about a troublesome lodger. The man from Mecca was, quite simply, a grave robber. Mr. Wahab was a ghoul. Why hadn't I thought of it before? Though they looked like ecclesiastical items they could not have come from a church. But tombs, especially the larger ones, were often a kind of underground chapel, and had an altar furnished with candlesticks, and an incense burner and crucifix.

It was almost certainly a Catholic tomb—the crucifix said that. An old tomb; this stuff had lain undisturbed for a century. A large tomb, big enough to hold an altar, and one that could be entered through a door—if there had been digging it would have been seen and reported. The tomb was probably above ground. But what sort of tomb contained camel bells?

This part of London was full of cemeteries—we had cremated Herbert Fleamarsh in nearby Kew. There were five important cemeteries not far from Miss Gowrie's house, and every church had a walled graveyard beside it. But only one of those churches interested me: it struck me that a grave robber needed darkness to hide him, and if he did not have it he might break the sort of lights I had seen smashed at St. Mary Magdalene's. But no theft had been reported there.

I did not want to see the caretaker again. He would wonder why I was back; he would be suspicious; he would ask awkward questions. I had no answers. So I let a day pass, and then I waited for the five o'clock darkness, and I entered the churchyard of St. Mary's wearing a black coat and black gloves and looking left and right. I crept toward the vaults, the flat-topped granite huts with iron doors, or sealed with stone blocks. They were unmarked, they were sadly neglected, and overgrown with high bushes. Some were hidden in grass, others had almost burst from the ground or been yanked aside by the roots of the trees. I was behind the church and fighting my way through a tangle of bushes when I saw the tent.

It was a sort of oriental tent, perhaps Arab, with a slanting roof and high steep sides flowing from neatly scalloped eaves. I thought for a moment that I had stumbled upon a group of campers—people often pitched tents by the roadside or in parks (I could see them from the windows of my flat in Battersea). Why not in this graveyard?

But the tent was made of stone. It was white granite or marble, with carved folds, and it bore a tablet with the name *Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*. The explorer's tomb was the strangest I had ever seen.

I went close and tried the door. The putty surrounding the door, a marble slab, had been dug away. But a padlock on a rusty hasp remained. I shook the padlock and it came apart in my hand: it had been sawed through. So he had broken it—I was sure that this was the work of Abdul Wahab Bin Baz. A poem was chiseled into the marble just above the door. I turned my small flashlight on it.

Farewell, dear friend, dead hero, the great life
Is ended, the great perils, the great joys;
And he to whom adventures were as toys,
Who seemed to bear a charm 'gainst spear or knife
Or bullet, now lies silent . . .

What was that? A sound from the churchyard gate.

Crouching, I ran around to the back of the vault. It was not easy—trees grew close to it, and I scratched my face on a branch as I squeezed through.

At the rear of the tomb, overgrown with bushes and partly hidden by the thickness of black branches, was an iron ladder. It was fixed to the stone and rose to the top of the tentlike roof. More to hide from the caretaker than to see where the ladder went, I climbed the iron rungs, and when I could not go any farther I looked down in amazement. I was looking straight into the chamber of the tomb.

This tomb, this stone tent, had a window! It was thick glass and I could see in the narrow beam of my flashlight that it had not been tampered with. But I knew at a glance that the tomb had been plundered. A century of sunlight through this window had faded the stone walls in places and also printed on them the shadows of the objects I had seen in the Arab's room—the lamps, the crucifix, the string of camel bells. Where a thurible had been plucked from the dust a disk mark remained of its oval base. Only these shadows were left of what had once been in the tomb—except for the two coffins, which lay on the floor, on either side of a row of footprints. The larger coffin had been opened. Its lid, a fraction lopsided, had a freshly yanked nail at its end and showed a seam of darkness. But if I had not already seen Burton's bones, if I had not tried the lock that seemed so secure, I doubt that I would have noticed that the coffin lid was ajar or suspected any tampering. Even under the penetrating light of my pocket flashlight the tomb was very murky, and only serious scrutiny told me that it had been broken into. It was a terrible little coffin room, it was dusty, it was cell-like; it gave me a good idea.

The Arab, Abdul Wahab Bin Baz, had to be stopped. Now I knew how.

It was no more than a short stroll, using the foot-

bridge over the railway tracks, to a row of shops. In one of these, with a sign saying IRONMONGERS, I bought a large, flat padlock. It was very similar to the one the fanatic from Mecca had cut through in order to enter Burton's tomb.

It was now well after six. The church was shut, the gate was locked. I scaled the brick wall of the churchyard and took up my position at the top of the ladder, where I rested against the slanting window of the tomb. I was completely hidden; the graveyard was as dark as the bottom of a deep hole. In a doggedly destructive way, by breaking all the churchyard lights, the Arab had guaranteed that I would not be seen.

I thought: What if he doesn't come back?

And yet, Isabel Burton's coffin had not been disturbed.

Later than I expected, after seven, when my knees were about to give out, I heard the thump of feet in the churchyard—someone had come over the wall. There was a swishing sound of legs moving in brambles and grass. If it was Abdul, and if he entered the tomb, I would see him through the window. I heard nothing for a while, and then there was a slow, millstone sound—the marble door being swung open. When he entered the tomb, I ducked, and I did not move again until, some seconds later, I heard the door being eased shut.

It was not closed entirely. I climbed down the ladder, dashed to the front of the tomb, and kicked the door. At that moment there was a cry from the vault, but I was quickly straightening the hasp and clapping the padlock on. There was no sound from inside. The Arab was sealed in. No one would hear him. He had asked for this: and now he was buried alive.

If you knew he was there and you listened carefully, you could hear a faint mewing, which was all that was audible of his wild screams through the thick marble walls of the tomb.



THOUGHT it was *him*," Miss Gowrie said, opening the door, with a look of apprehension still on her face—fright takes a while to fade.

"He won't be back tonight," I said. "He may not be back at all."

"He's out haunting houses, I expect," she said.

"Not exactly."

"You come in and have a nice cup of tea," Miss Gowrie said. "Put your feet up. Look at the time! It's gone eight—you've had a long day."

My day was not over. I told Miss Gowrie I had discovered where Wahab had stolen his brassware. I gathered up the objects and put them into a sack. I would return them to their rightful place, I said.

"May I sleep in Mr. Wubb's room tonight?" I said.

"What if he comes back?"

"Not a chance," I said.

"You never know with blackies," she said.

In his stale bed, in that small room that smelled of carpet dust and prayer sweat, I thought about Abdul Wahab and it occurred to me why he had broken into Burton's tomb. It was simple revenge. Hadn't Burton, the unbeliever, trampled all over Islam? In this Muslim's eyes, hadn't the English explorer violated the sanctity of his religion by dressing up as an Arab and entering Mecca? Burton was no respecter of taboos or traditions—he had plundered the secrets of Islam in his search for adventure.

This was one Muslim's reply: the Arab dressed as an English gentleman, prowling undetected in London—as anonymous as Burton had been in holy Mecca. There was a crude justice in what the disguised Arab had done to Burton's bones in the Mortlake churchyard. This was a civilized country and a different century, but the smell in that bedroom was of dust and bones and the stink of prayer.

I had set my wrist alarm to wake me before dawn. It was still dark when I crept out of Miss Gowrie's house. I liked the thrill, carrying the brassware and camel bells and Richard Burton's bones through the damp, chilly streets to the graveyard where the tomb had been opened.

There was no sound at the door of the vault. I went around back and mounted the ladder and shone my flashlight inside.

Wahab lay on the floor, sleeping on his side. He woke when I turned the light on his eyes. This was the first time I had really seen him.

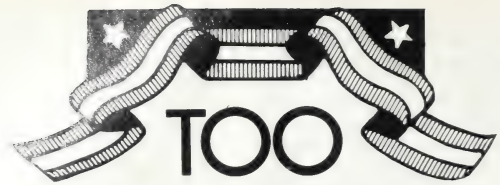
His dark face had a stretched look of panic—the expression certain fish have in fishbowls: trapped and pop-eyed, with fat, swollen lips. His eyes were red and puffy, and he was in the last stage of terror. He was limp, making pleading faces at me—or rather at the light, and blinking at the brightness of it. He would have confessed at that moment to being Leon Trotsky.

He clasped his hands and implored me.

I breathed on the window. The vapor condensed, and with my finger I traced a cross in it and shone my flashlight on it. It is the simplest of symbols, but to the man from Mecca it was strange and unwelcome, and I was sure that it made him more fearful than the darkness he had endured in that tomb all night. It was now safe to remove the padlock: I had announced myself as the avenging Christian.

As soon as the hasp was released he pushed the door open, gasped—gave a whinny of fright—and then disappeared at the far end of the churchyard.

It was still dark. I had plenty of time to replace the thuribles, the lamp, the candlesticks, the crucifix, and the camel bells, as well as Burton himself in his ornate and rotting coffin. Then I shut the door of the tomb and locked it. I had left everything just where it belonged in the tomb, as anyone could see. ■



TOO MUCH JUSTICE

Why it took fifteen months and millions of dollars not to send John Hinckley to prison.

by Stuart Taylor, Jr.

I believe that justice was done. Justice is a process, not a particular result.

—Alan M. Dershowitz, Harvard law professor, commenting on the jury verdict finding John W. Hinckley, Jr., not guilty by reason of insanity when he shot President Reagan.

I do not think nobody knows what was within his head that day.

—Woodrow Johnson, parking-lot attendant, one of the Hinckley jurors, commenting on what he learned from the eight-week trial to establish what was in Hinckley's head that day.



GUISEPPE ZANGARA climbed on a chair at Bayfront Park in Miami on February 15, 1933, and fired five shots at an open car in which President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt was talking with Chicago mayor Anton Cermak. He missed Roosevelt but hit Cermak, who died on March 6. Zangara's motive, arguably the product of an insane mind, was that "since my stomach hurt, I get even with capitalists by kill the president." He was indicted for murder the day Cermak died, pleaded guilty, and was electrocuted two weeks later, complaining that there was "no one here to take my picture."

Forty-nine years later, on their second day of deliberations, the twelve jurors assigned to decide the guilt or innocence of John Hinckley, who had gunned down President Reagan and three others to win fame and to impress a movie actress, sent the judge a note, asking for a dictionary. They wanted "to find out for ourselves, was all poetry fiction," the jury foreman, a twenty-two-year-old hotel-banquet worker named Lawrence H. Coffey, explained later to a subcommittee of gaping senators. Thus the jurors hoped to resolve a long, tangential debate between a defense lawyer, who interpreted Hinckley's practice of scrawling morbid and bizarre images on notebook paper as proof of his insanity, and a prosecution psychiatrist, who dismissed Hinckley's versified maunderings as "fiction."

So it came down to this: after the most elaborate insanity defense case ever staged—after thirteen months of pretrial maneuvering over proce-

Stuart Taylor, Jr., a reporter for The New York Times, *covered the Hinckley trial. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School.*

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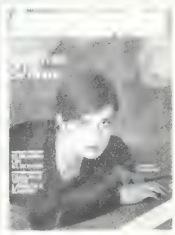
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So WHY did it take almost fifteen months and $3 million from shootings to jury verdict? It was not that either side was stalling. Rather it was, for the most part, because in cases in which the stakes are high enough and there is money or glory enough to compensate the lawyers, our legal system creates incentives and opportunities for them to litigate to the eyeballs even over unimportant side issues. The computer printout listing the documents filed during the first year of legal maneuvering in the pretrial phase of the Hinckley case is more than fifteen feet long. It contains hundreds of entries representing thousands of pages of motions, memoranda of points and authorities, petitions, objections, requests for reconsideration and clarification, and appeals of every side issue imaginable.

The most time-consuming matters were the eight months of independent, redundant psychiatric evaluations of Hinckley by three separate teams of experts, and the six months of litigation over defense motions to prevent the jury from learning what Hinckley had said to three federal agents during a twenty-five-minute conversation several hours after the shootings, and what he had written in some mysterious notes taken from his prison cell in July 1981.

In what has to have been one of the most elaborate efforts in all history to plumb the mind of one human being, Hinckley was interviewed for hundreds of hours in separate, contemporaneous psychiatric evaluations by three psychiatrists and a psychologist for the prosecution (who prepared a 628-page report), three psychiatrists and a psychologist for the defense, and two prison psychiatrists and a psychologist who were appointed by the court to do their own evaluation. Total cost of the mental-health experts: more than $500,000.

As for the federal agents, the prosecution wanted them to testify because they would have said that Hinckley had seemed cool and rational only hours after he had squeezed off six shots in what the defense claimed was an insane frenzy. The defense wanted the agents not to testify, for the same reason. The defense won. But the excluded testimony was hardly worth the months of trial delay and litigation to anybody, because the prosecution still had five other witnesses who had spoken with Hinckley the day of the shootings. They later told the jury, without contradiction by any defense witness, and without any apparent effect on the verdict, about how cool and rational he had seemed when they saw him.

The defense victory on this point is nonetheless memorable because it embodied an especially silly aspect of the famous Miranda rule. The contention of the defense lawyers was that Hinckley's rights under the Fifth and Sixth Amendments had been violated because the federal agents had asked him some questions after he had requested a lawyer. All the evidence showed that Hinckley had been handled with exceeding gentleness by the police and federal agents after his assassination attempt, had been advised no less than four times of his "Miranda" rights to remain silent and to have a lawyer present, and had thereafter willingly answered the agents' questions about his background and travels before the lawyer he had requested had been contacted. But the Supreme Court's 1966 decision in *Miranda* v. *Arizona* not only required the reading of rights Hinckley was given, but also provided that "if the individual states that he wants an attorney, the interrogation must cease until an attorney is present," whether or not there is any evidence of coercion, intimidation, or "third degree" interrogation on the part of the police.

Nothing Hinckley told the agents was actually in dispute, and the agents' potential testimony didn't even relate to what he had said—only how he had said it. It's hard to imagine a situation further removed from the original purposes of the Fifth Amendment's ban on compelled self-incrimination. Nevertheless, Judge Parker, anxious to avoid any misstep, barred the three agents from testifying. The prosecution took the issue to the appeals court before the trial but lost there too. The defense lawyers, emboldened by this success, next advanced the audacious argument that all the prosecution's psychiatrists should be disqualified from testifying because they had been "tainted" by knowledge of the suppressed conversation with the three agents. Judge Parker could not quite stomach this astonishing idea and rejected the motion after a special hearing.

Finally, there was the trial, the most elaborate and expensive in the modern history of the insanity defense, with elements of tragedy, melodrama, soap opera, psychiatric lecture, and mime. It began on April 27 with a week of jury selection, and ended on June 21. It was often reminiscent of Hinckley's "movie starring me," particularly when he took an active role by suddenly stalking out of the courtroom when the videotaped image of Jodie Foster testified that she had had no relationship with him, and by excusing himself less dramatically on several other occasions when he seemed pained by testimony about his "pathetic" pursuit of the actress. On each occasion, a movie camera was set up in the courtroom and trained on the witness stand so that Hinckley could watch from his cell.

President Reagan, Jim Brady, and the other victims—"bit players," to Hinckley—quickly disappeared from the scene and faded into the recesses of memory. The Hinckley family tragedy, complete with tales of Titter the cat, was reenacted from the witness stand by the decent but guilt-ridden parents, who had kicked their son out and told him to support himself on the advice of Dr. John J. Hopper, Jr., a hometown psychiatrist. "I am the cause of John's tragedy," John W. Hinckley, Sr., declared as his strong, sonorous voice gave way to tears. He may come to regret this assumption of responsibil-

ity: the lawyers for three of his son's victims (all of them except Reagan) have filed multimillion-dollar lawsuits against John Jr., and lawyers for at least one of them are intensifying their efforts to find a legal hook to get at what is left of John Sr.'s assets. (Not to mention their efforts to get at any assets or malpractice insurance poor Dr. Hopper may have.)

Then the opposing teams of high-powered, hired psychiatrists and psychologists took over, with their ruminations on Hinckley's "inner world," on his childhood shyness and long-standing friendlessness and depression, and on his fantasies about kidnapping Jodie Foster or skyjacking a plane so that he could demand that Reagan resign and vacate the White House and he and Jodie could move in. There were psychiatric interpretations of the bizarre images and oedipal themes in Hinckley's writings, contradictory diagnoses, debates over the width of the wrinkles in his brain, and efforts to present the doctors' carefully coached and rehearsed advocacy as objective scientific fact.

Dr. David M. Bear, a defense psychiatrist whose glittering curriculum vitae include the top academic ranking in Harvard College's Class of 1965, told me after the verdict that he had spent "at least twenty to twenty-five hours" rehearsing his testimony with defense lawyers. They convinced him that he was "part of the adversary procedure" and should make "a clear, strong case." He said the lawyers told him to tell the truth, but not to "weaken your answers with all the qualifications you think you ought to make," and not to volunteer anything that might weaken the defense case unless the cross-examining prosecutor was sharp enough to bring such information out with pointed questions. "They said, 'Oh, don't mention the [exploding] bullets. My God, that's so damaging to the case,'" Dr. Bear recalled. But he said, "I was determined never to tell a lie." The Harvard Medical School psychiatrist said he had been paid about $35,000 in fees and expenses for his work, including $125 an hour for his testimony that Hinckley was insane and could not justly be held responsible.

Perhaps the extreme of Freudian abstraction in the trial testimony came when Dr. Thomas C. Goldman, another defense psychiatrist, read from his report that Hinckley subconsciously saw Miss Foster as "an idealized mother who is all-giving and endowed with magical power," and saw Reagan as an "all-evil prohibitive figure who hates him, seeks to destroy him, and deny access to the idealized mother figure." Roger M. Adelman, the chief prosecutor, who specialized in beating up on defense psychiatrists in cross-examination and in his closing argument to the jury, had a lot of fun with that one. But it didn't get him a conviction.

For every defense theory about how some episode showed Hinckley was crazy, the prosecution had an answer; for every piece of prosecution evidence that suggested he was sane, the defense had an explanation. Take Hinckley's recollection, in psychiatric interviews, that Reagan "looked right at me" and waved on his way into the Washington Hilton Hotel, before Hinckley pulled his gun from his pocket and shot him on his way back out. The defense experts testified that this was an insane "idea of reference," a kind of momentary delusion that someone was sending him a message to act. The prosecution experts said what probably happened was that Reagan looked right at Hinckley and waved. As for all the prosecution witnesses who testified about how cool and normal Hinckley had seemed to them the day of the shootings, Dr. Bear countered for the defense that the appearance of being steely calm and "cool as a cucumber" fit only too well with his own diagnosis of latent or "pseudo-neurotic" schizophrenia.

THE THIRD SENSE in which the result of the Hinckley trial was arbitrary is that he was found not guilty by reason of insanity while so many others, just as crazy and in some cases far crazier than he, are convicted and sentenced to prison or even death. In 1972, Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart voted to strike down the death penalty, in part because it had been used so rarely that those



UPI

"Squeaky" Fromme, who tried to shoot President Gerald Ford. A follower of Charles Manson, she did not attempt an insanity defense.

executed were "a capriciously selected random handful" among many similar criminals. A successful insanity defense of a lucid gunman like John Hinckley is almost as "wanton and freakish" (in Stewart's words) as the death penalty, although obviously the consequences are more welcome to the defendant.

Indeed, more than one legal scholar has noted that the characteristics of mad, senseless brutality and callous indifference to suffering that may qualify a murderer for the death penalty under modern criminal statutes and Supreme Court decisions are the same traits that make for a good insanity defense. When the same particulars can turn an ordinary murder into one deserving the ultimate sanction, or can excuse it completely, a criminal justice system is truly at war with itself.

Hinckley felt little compassion or remorse for James Brady, the presidential press secretary whom he disabled for life with a bullet that exploded in his brain, or for his other victims. Defense psychiatrists cited Hinckley's view of the victims as "bit players," whose suffering was unimportant, as proof that he met the legal test of insanity. Psychiatrists hired by prosecutors seeking the death penalty of, say, a Mafia hit man might make very different use of very similar evidence of callousness.

The Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy by Lee Harvey Oswald, and the murder of Oswald two days later by Jack Ruby, observed, as have various scholars, that all or almost all assassins and would-be assassins in the nation's history seemed mentally deranged to some degree. But Ruby, whose defense of insanity was flamboyantly presented by San Francisco showman Melvin M. Belli, was convicted of murder despite psychiatric testimony that he was a "psychotic depressive" divorced from reality. So was Sirhan B. Sirhan, who assassinated Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. Sirhan was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced by the jury to death (later reduced to life imprisonment when the California death penalty law was voided), after a three-month trial in which a battery of defense experts described him as a paranoid schizophrenic who was subconsciously killing his father in an oedipal rage, and a high-powered team of volunteer defense lawyers argued unsuccessfully that "diminished capacity" at the time of the crime made him incapable of premeditation.

Arthur H. Bremer, whose life as a publicity-seeking loner stalking presidents bears a striking resemblance to Hinckley's, and whose sanity can be doubted just as plausibly, was convicted in 1972 of assault with intent to kill Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, after a four-day trial. A Maryland state jury took ninety minutes to reject his defense of insanity. Lynette Alice ("Squeaky") Fromme, a member of mass murderer Charles Manson's mad cult of violence, and Sara Jane Moore, a wacko with a background in mental hospitals and radical politics, were both convicted of trying to shoot President Gerald Ford in unrelated attempts in September 1975 after each of them decided not to attempt an insanity defense. This decision alone casts doubt on their sanity.

Before Hinckley, the only assassin or would-be assassin tried for attacking a sitting president who had escaped conviction was an underemployed house painter named Richard Lawrence, who attempted to kill Andrew Jackson in 1835, in the first attempt on the life of a president. Lawrence's two pistols inexplicably misfired after their percussion caps had exploded loudly, the second at point-blank range, before a crowd of dignitaries on the east portico of the Capitol. Several doctors said he had insane delusions. It took the jury five minutes to return its verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity, after a trial in which Lawrence proclaimed that he was the king of England, the United States, and Rome and that Jackson had denied him his fortune and his thrones. Francis Scott Key, who had turned to prosecuting criminals in the years after writing "The Star Spangled Banner," did not vigorously contest the insanity defense, possibly because, under the law at the time, Lawrence could have been sentenced to only a few years in jail if convicted. After the acquittal, Lawrence was sent to jail anyway as a lunatic. Twenty years later, he became one of the first patients in the new Government Hospital, where he died in obscurity in 1861, after twenty-six years in confinement. That hospital, later named St. Elizabeths, is where John Hinckley is now being held.

In more recent times, although the courts have broadened the legal definition of insanity considerably, a successful insanity defense of a celebrated, violent crime by a person other than a raving, hallucinating lunatic is still quite rare, and juries are generally thought to be hostile to the defense.

So what accounts for the success of Hinckley's lawyers where so many others have failed? Nobody really knows. Money doubtless had something to do with it—the money that paid for their own high-priced skills and huge investment of time preparing their case, and allowed them to hire leading psychiatrists and put on the most elaborate insanity defense in history. The fact that none of Hinckley's victims died probably helped. Hinckley's courtroom demeanor, more sad and childish than raving and Manson-like, probably also helped. Perhaps it made him seem less crazy, but it also made him seem less frightening and dangerous. The instruction that the prosecution must prove sanity beyond a reasonable doubt also helped, although juries have happily ignored this near impossible standard in many other cases, including Bremer's.

Finally, in hindsight it seems that the prosecution may have erred if, as some observers say (and the prosecutors deny), it tried to exclude educated white people from the jury. The thought may have been that the mostly black jurors, of mainly limited education, would not sympathize with a rich white

:id, and would not linger over the niceties of "rea- onable doubt." But the fact that Ronald Reagan s not a particularly beloved leader among inner- :ity blacks may have given Hinckley's crime less visceral impact for the jurors than it would have had f the victim had been, say, Bobby Kennedy.

CAN ANYTHING be done to limit wasteful extravagances like the Hinckley trial? Can or should the insanity defense be changed? The answer to the first question is that little can be done directly. It would help to have simpler laws, written n a way designed to limit evidence and legal ar- gument by sharpening the issues to be debated in :ourt. But this is a pipe dream. Wasteful litigation, :ivil and criminal, is too deeply ingrained a habit n American culture and capitalism. More drastic efforts to attack litigious waste at its roots—such as legal limits on how much can be spent on pros- ecuting and defending a criminal case—would prob- ably be unconstitutional.

One can hope that spectacles like the Hinckley trial and the IBM case will gradually produce changes in attitudes and cut down on incentives for lawyers to engage in such overkill, or even cut down on lawyers themselves. Judges could apply stricter standards of relevance and common sense to limit tangential or repetitious testimony. Jurors and judges alike could hold a special dose of skepticism in re- serve to unload on defendants and other litigants who invest in particularly dazzling displays of vir- tuosity by the most expensive hired guns. Bright college students considering law school might think longer and harder about whether they really want to join in the national binge of legalistic waste.

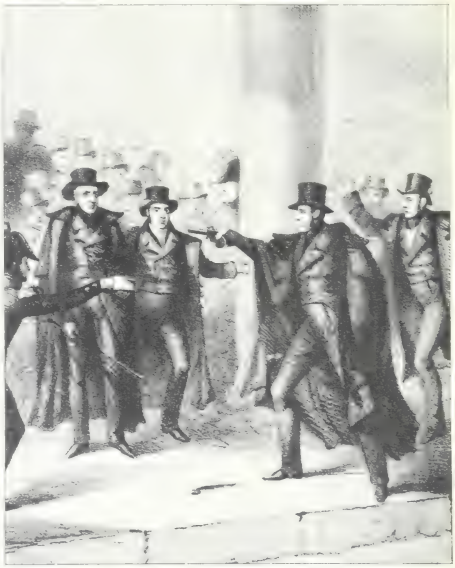
As to the second question, the insanity defense should be narrowed, the class of people who qualify for it should be identified with greater precision, and the new, alternative verdict of "guilty but mentally ill" that some states have enacted should be adopted more widely to deal with the John Hinckleys of this world, the partly crazies, who deserve neither to be absolved of responsibility nor to be treated just like ordinary criminals.

Abolishing the insanity defense, as some in Con- gress and elsewhere have proposed, would be going too far. Some people are so crazy that they literally do not know what they are doing. They think they are shooting the devil when they shoot another hu- man being. But an insanity defense broad enough to encompass John Hinckley undercuts its own use- fulness as a moral cornerstone of the criminal law, which is to reaffirm that most of us must be held responsible for the harm we do to others by making allowances for the very few whose crimes are com- mitted in utter ignorance of their wrongfulness.

If John Hinckley cannot be punished for his crime, who can? Attempted murder is rarely the product of a rational decision. Almost all murderers are a little crazy at the moment of violence, a little "driven" by something, not often as chronically crazy as Hinckley, perhaps, but almost as far down the slippery slope of arguably impaired control that leads to the slough of determinism. If John Hinck- ley cannot be punished, how can we justly punish teenage ghetto dwellers who grow up on welfare without fathers in their homes, attend bad schools where violence stalks the hallways, turn to drugs for respite from the dreary monotony of their lives, turn to robbing grocery stores to support their drug hab- its, and finally panic and shoot the grocer because they think he may have a gun of his own under the counter?

The only reason today's federal rules about the insanity defense, and similar state rules, don't rou- tinely produce intolerable results is that judges and jurors have enough common sense not to take the rules literally.

For federal offenses, the legal rules work like this: if a defendant pleads insanity, the verdict must be not guilty unless the prosecution proves the defen- dant's sanity at the time of the crime beyond a rea- sonable doubt. And, under the most logical read- ing of various court rulings, a defendant found not guilty by reason of insanity may be entitled to re- lease soon thereafter, unless the government can prove by "clear and convincing evidence" that he is



Bettmann Archive

Richard Lawrence, who tried to kill Andrew Jackson in 1835, was the first would-be presidential assassin to get off on an insanity defense.

currently both mentally ill and dangerous. Add to this the commonplace observation by civil libertarians and psychiatric experts that modern learning cannot predict or prove with any precision, on the basis of past crimes, whether anyone will be dangerous in the future, and you have quite a formula.

Logically, almost any outwardly rational perpetrator of a bizarre (i.e., arguably insane) crime, like Hinckley, can be acquitted for want of proof "beyond a reasonable doubt" that he is sane, and released from the mental hospital soon after that for want of "clear and convincing evidence" that he is insane. If the evidence regarding sanity is inconclusive—as it almost always is—in theory at least there is no way to keep someone like Hinckley locked up, either in prison or in a mental hospital. Hinckley's lawyers and parents have said that they will not try to get him out immediately, but will wait at least until they consider him no longer dangerous. But anytime he gets tired of St. Elizabeths, Hinckley can proclaim his desire for a new lawyer, and publicity-seeking volunteers will come running. "I'm going to walk out the door whether the public likes it or not" (if the doctors and judge give the go-ahead), Hinckley said, in an unsolicited phone call to a *Washington Post* reporter.

Up until about twenty years ago, people acquitted of serious crimes on grounds of insanity were almost invariably packed away to mental hospitals, often as horrible as prisons, for the rest of their lives. But psychiatric trends toward deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, combined with judicial decisions expanding their civil liberties, have led to increasingly frequent early releases of criminals acquitted for insanity, who occasionally kill or maim again. "Perhaps for the first time in history, a successful plea of insanity has real bite," says Dr. Alan A. Stone, a psychiatrist at Harvard Law School.

THE MOST sensible solution would be to reverse the burden of proof about insanity at both stages of the process. The defendant who admits to committing a crime and seeks to avoid responsibility by claiming he was insane should be required to prove it. (Given the inherent uncertainties, however, requiring the defendant to prove his mental state "beyond a reasonable doubt" would be as unfair as the current rule imposing that burden on the prosecution.) It is also fair that the defendant who has been acquitted on grounds of insanity should have the burden of proving his current sanity, or harmlessness, before he is released from the mental hospital. Society deserves at least this much protection.

Congress has actually passed laws that require criminal defendants pleading insanity in the District of Columbia to prove it at trial, and then to prove their sanity if they later want out of the mental hospital. But a Rube Goldberg series of court decisions saved Hinckley from the first burden and might save him from the second. The D.C. federal appeals court ruled in 1968 that when a defendant is found not guilty merely because prosecutors could not prove his sanity beyond a reasonable doubt, this alone is not enough to keep him in the hospital. He has a constitutional right to release unless the government can then prove his *insanity* by the standards of ordinary commitment proceedings. To overrule this decision, Congress in 1970 put the burden of proof on District of Columbia defendants at both stages —trial, and petition for release from the hospital. But the federal appeals court ruled that this law cannot apply to *federal* trials, since that would unconstitutionally discriminate against federal defendants in D.C. as opposed to federal defendants elsewhere.

Hinckley was charged with three federal crimes and ten D.C. crimes. Ordinarily, defendants charged with D.C. crimes do have the burden of proving insanity. But Judge Parker feared (reasonably enough) that the jury would be confused if instructed that the prosecution must prove Hinckley's sanity in shooting the president, but Hinckley must prove his *insanity* in shooting citizen Ronald Reagan. So, to be safe, the judge put the burden of proof on the prosecution for all thirteen counts, thus totally frustrating the will of Congress. Furthermore, since Hinckley was tried under the old "reasonable doubt" standard, the logic of the 1968 case seems to apply to him and he may be entitled to release unless the government—having failed to prove that he is sane—can now prove that he is insane.

Congress has never passed general federal legislation dealing with the insanity defense, but has let the courts set the rules. The courts have made a mess of it. Congress should get to work and clean the mess up, and, one might hope, inspire legislatures in states where similar messes exist to do the same.

Aside from shifting the burden of proof about insanity, Congress should replace the courts' mushy "substantial capacity" test of legal insanity with one requiring the defendant to show that he was totally incapable of knowing what he was doing or knowing that it was wrong.

For partly crazy defendants like Hinckley, who would not qualify as insane under such a test, Congress should establish an alternative verdict of "guilty but mentally ill." As Lawrence Coffey, foreman of the jury that reluctantly acquitted Hinckley for want of any alternative to an unqualified conviction, told the Senate subcommittee, "It should be changed in some way where the defendant gets mental help, gets help enough that he is not harmful to himself and society, and then be punished for what he has done wrong." ■



Stop Me Before I Write Again

Six hundred more pages by Joyce Carol Oates.

by James Wolcott

UNDER the doorframe Joyce Carol Oates's *A Bloodsmoor Romance** insidiously creeps, oil-black and oozesome. Like the monster that caused Steve McQueen such distress in *The Blob*, Oates's new novel—her fourteenth—is a near-unstoppable sprawl of renegade force, fattening itself on the bodies of the sleepy and slow-footed as police officers futilely pump shots into its rubbery maw. The novels of most so-called serious writers are usually exercises of craft and care, but *A Bloodsmoor Romance* seems a freak of circumstance, a speck of inspiration that somehow metamorphosed into a word-goop with a ravenous case of the eaties. After the psychological gusts and rages of her previous novel, a contemporary tale of revenge entitled *Angel of Light*, Oates has again laced up her rain bonnet and returned to the mock-gothic storminess of her greatest success, *Bellefleur*. A chronicle of twenty grief-tossed years in the lives of the Zinn family of Pennsylvania, *A Bloodsmoor Romance*—blood on the moor; bring on the Brontës!—is intended to be a subversive take-off of the brand-name gothics cluttering up the nation's paperback racks, all those Harlequin and Regency and Coventry romances so treasured by dream-hungry housewives. But crowded as it is with showy episodes (séances, virgin snatchings, sadomasochistic tussles), *Bloodsmoor* wants to be more than a fond, romping satire. It's a feminist gothic, a demonstration of how the fripperies of ladylike propriety—corsets and ribbons, parasols and cinches—served as the bonds of erotic repression, leading to madness and lunatic excess. In the heart of every shy maiden is a snow leopard of desire waiting to leap free and bloody its claws.

Tidily put, *A Bloodsmoor Romance* tracks the steps of five vestal pretties and the ways their lives tempestuously stray. On a dusky evening in 1879, Deirdre Zinn, the adopted daughter of the eccentric genius inventor John Quincy Zinn, is plucked from the lawns of Kidde-

* E. P. Dutton, $16.95.

Sarah Drowe

master Hall in an outlaw balloon and carried off into the azure. Left on the ground gawping are her half-sisters Samantha, Octavia, Malvinia, and Constance Philippa, too astonished by the sight of this black apparition to toss aside their crochetwork and summon aid. Deirdre's surrealistic abduction becomes the departure point for *Bloodsmoor*'s parade of period kink, as the Zinn sisters fling to the winds their girlhood inhibitions and abandon unwanted husbands, consort with actors, even trade in their sex for a new gender. Although each fallen peach in the Zinn family is given her due, Deirdre seems to be the author's stand-in, not only because she's such a pale wisp of injured feelings—a classic spurned duckling—but because she turns out to be a seeress, a psychic whose head is full of unruly voices. (Oates, as we shall see, often describes the creative process as an invasion of voices.)

But if Deirdre is Oates's fond fancy, the pivotal figure in *Bloodsmoor* is Deirdre's great-aunt Edwina Kiddemaster, who churns out volume after volume of instructional Christian uplift—books with titles like *A Guide to Proper Christian Behavior Amongst Young Persons* and *The Young Lady's Friend: A Compendium of Correct Forms*. Pious and exacting, Edwina Kiddemaster might have sprung from the pages of *The Feminization of American Culture*, Ann Douglas's 1977 study of Victorian sentimentalism and its influence on mass culture. In her starched proprieties, Great-Aunt Edwina isn't unlike Sarah Hale, a magazine editor described by Douglas as "the most important arbiter of feminine opinion of her day, [who] frequently reprinted clerical injunctions to women with obvious approval." Armed with hindsight, Oates makes light amusement of the tropes of maidenly woe, all those swoonings and fretful blushes. She mocks their faith, their fears, their candied politenesses, their snippy sarcasms, their adoration of mustachioed swells. She's using pop literature to unmask pop literature—subverting the conventions of feminine fiction to reveal how those conventions shrouded the true appetites of women in layers of silk and fluff. Like John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy, A Bloodsmoor Romance* is deliberately wordy and antique, a stony artifice carpeted with plastic moss.

ALTHOUGH *A Bloodsmoor Romance* has the fixings of a provocative antinovel, Oates's inability to turn off the babble once again plunges her into the gumbo. In a typical Oates novel, the reader is treated—if that's the word—to a series of Big Scenes connected by a lot of flimsy, careless doodle. Her fans probably drum their fingers patiently during the drowsier passages, knowing that Oates will soon barbecue a new fright for their snacking pleasure. (In Oates's *Wonderland*, a doctor broils and dines on the uterus of a female cadaver. You can't get much freakier than that, and you wouldn't want to try.) In this novel, however, the vamping tap steps leading up to the show-piece horrors are so busy and arch that there's no way for the reader to take a breather between rumbles. To unravel this family saga, Oates has taken on the narrative voice of a flustered old biddy and the results are—well, ruinous. The text becomes an orgy of italics and apostrophes and dithering digressions.

> *That I, as the narrator, am not to* blame *for the sordidness of this particular enterprise, and that the sophisticated reader well comprehends this fact does very little, I confess, to alleviate my sense of both* revulsion *and* guilt. *Nor does the fact that, in seeking to illumine the duplicitous ways by which the eldest Zinn girl, Constance Philippa* [she of the wayward gender], *alter'd herself, or was alter'd, into the outlaw Philippe Fox, I freely—nay, proudly—confess myself* I am ignorant of all detail, and wish to remain so. *For is not the artist, as I have argued earlier, obliged to serve the higher moral truths, in his or her craft? Is he not obliged to* better *the world, and not merely* transcribe *it?*

Beats me; but I do know that fluffing one's petticoats for over 600 pages is of a coyness not to be endured, even (I suspect) by those most devoted to Oates's bumblebee flights.

Perhaps the key to Joyce Carol Oates's fiction is her phantasmagorical fear of sex, her revulsion from the flesh's treacheries. Sex in her fiction is seldom a tender idyll, a bit of lingering play, or even a collision of will and temperament (as it is in, say, Mailer's notorious story "The Time of Her Time"). Sex is instead a ghoulish prank, a corporeal meltdown. In *Bloodsmoor*, one man who has the misfortune of marrying a Zinn daughter doesn't realize that his bride has made a bolt until he's finished rogering a mannikin—"no woman lay beside him, no trembling Constance Philippa, nay, not even a human being, but a *dressmaker's dummy*: headless, armless, and possessing no nether limbs!" (The message: men, in their blind brute lust, aren't smart enough to know whether it's live or Memorex.) Another, who has a thirst for bondage and self-mortification, dies in the saddle when his wife, Octavia, too severely tightens a noose during one of their coupling sessions, snapping off his oxygen supply. Almost needless to add, these slapstick entanglements send Oates's narrator into a nervous tizzy. She even worries that men of base appetite may use her chronicle as an excuse to dash off and have an irresponsible wank. ". . . I am heartsick, at the distinct possibility, that, amidst my readership, there may well be, here and there, those persons of the masculine gender, who, lacking an intrinsic purity of character, may, by laborious effort, and much unseemly exercise of the lower ranges of the imagination, *summon forth a prurient gratification*, from these hapless pages!" Before reaching for the smelling salts to revive Oates's wilting authoress, note how the commas in the above sentence slow down the action like speed bumps,

forcing the reader to brake, press down on the gas pedal, then brake again. Sentences that fitful won't inflame anyone's libido, as Oates surely knows. She's simply giving herself a tickle.

At times, the novel *A Bloodsmoor Romance* most resembles is *Fanny*, that pastiche of naughty whimsies slapped together by the deplorable Erica Jong. Jong, too, peppered her pages with exclamation marks—"I wrote and burnt and wrote and burnt! I would pen a Pastoral thro'-out three sleepless Nights only to commit it to the Flames!" etc.—and turned sex into grunting slapstick. Indeed, both books take mischievous delight in dragging famous authors through the bedsheets. In *Fanny*, Pope and Swift descended in hot pursuit of Fannikin's cunnikins, and in *Bloodsmoor* it's Mark Twain who turns satyr. After an evening spent shoveling in oysters, pork, and tripe, Mark Twain makes for the four-poster with Malvinia, only to have her turn into a spasm-racked tigress: she slaps Twain about, pinches and bites, then yanks on "*his masculine organ of regeneration!*"—which of course leaves the old boy rather winded. As comedy, this scene is about as imaginative and subtle as a whoopee cushion slipped under the circus fat lady, but what makes it truly disagreeable is Oates's shameless zeal—her willingness to do *anything* to tart up her book, even turn a writer as great as Twain into a pornographic buffoon. But there's probably no point in blaming Oates for her lapses in taste and consideration. She doesn't seem able to help herself. Voices knock, the wind whistles, and off Oates floats, into the Twilight Zone . . .

SHE SEEMS aware of her plight, poor thing. In earlier interviews, Oates used to pooh-pooh the idea that she wrote too much, claiming that she frittered away most of the day in idle reverie. "Most of the time I do nothing . . . ," she told Joe David Bellamy in *The New Fiction* (1974). "There are not enough hours in the day. Yet I waste most of my time, in daydreaming, in drawing faces on pieces of paper. . . ." Now that Oates is the author of fourteen novels, eleven collections of short stories, three volumes of criticism, and countless poems, prose poems, letters to the editor, and reviews, she can hardly remain faithful to the notion that she dribbles away her afternoons at the sketch pad. In a recent essay in the *Hudson Review* entitled "Notes on Failure," Oates obliquely defends her frantic beavering away at literature by invoking Virginia Woolf: "*This insatiable desire to write something before I die, this ravaging sense of the shortness and feverishness of life, make me cling . . . to my one anchor*—so Virginia Woolf, in her diary, speaks for us all." Impressive-sounding as this is, it somehow fails to convince, at least as far as Joyce Carol Oates is concerned. Virginia Woolf, with death pressing down on her brow, may have written with feverish haste, but her novels are models of shape and discipline—she didn't slop words across the page like a washerwoman flinging soiled water across the cobblestones. Oates's books, however, are wonders of reckless energy and dishevelment. Although Oates's poetry is hardly ringing or memorable, it's easier to take than her prose because in writing poetry she's compelled to choose this word, that. But in writing fiction she doesn't seem to spiff up her sentences before dispatching them into the world; ragtag and motley, her phrases are thrown into the breach like waves of ill-prepared soldiers, a doomed multitude. She ought to spend more time revising and paring down, but she seems incapable of trimming away her wordy flab, or unwilling. Perhaps she *prefers* to drift high and free in the transcendental ether.

What *A Bloodsmoor Romance* makes clear is that writing, for Oates, is not a vocation or a calling but a semidivine compulsion. To her, the writer is a shortwave set receiving and beaming messages into the far reaches of dreamland. "The practicing writer, the writer-at-work, the writer immersed in his or her project, is not an entity at all, let alone a person," she writes in "Notes on Failure," "but some curious mélange of wildly varying states of mind, clustered toward what might be called the darker end of the spectrum: indecision, frustration, pain, dismay, despair, remorse, impatience, outright failure." Yes, uneasy lies the head that wears a crown of thorns, and even branching off into criticism offers no surcease of woe. She writes in her preface to the lit-crit collection *Contraries*, "The critic is a pilgrim, an acolyte, a translator; a gnostic intermediary fueled by the need to bring metaphors from one system to another." (She seems to have picked up a lot of highfalutin static from Harold Bloom.) To all this worry and bother I would counter with a remark from Nabokov, who wrote in his novel *Glory* that his hero sought in literature not the humdrum obvious but "the unexpected, sunlit clearings, where you can stretch until your joints crunch, and remain entranced." Even when Joyce Carol Oates is in a playful mood, her writing fails to provide patches of sunlit ease; she's too self-mesmerized to tune out the racket in her head and clear away a pool of summery calm, preferring instead to heap on the rubble, the noise, the piles of broken glass. She doesn't write books now, the books write her. She's like an obsessive pianist who even in her sleep practices arpeggio runs, her fingers rippling up and down a phantom keyboard. Snap to, Ms. Oates. It isn't too late. Wake up, wake up, wake up! ■

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Who Was That Mass Man, Anyway?

by Robert Asahina

What émigré intellectuals like Hannah Arendt don't understand about America.

WHAT would you do if you were an intellectual and you woke up in a hospital room after suffering a car crash? If you were Hannah Arendt, you'd start complaining about the hired help. As Elisabeth Young-Bruehl relates in *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*,* after her accident in 1962, Arendt griped from her sickbed that "the whole place is run under the motto: we could not care less," and even "snapped at a nurse who had the very American audacity to call her 'Honey.'"

That's gratitude for you. No doubt the author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and (eventually) nine other weighty tomes would rather have been addressed as *Fräulein Doktor Professor*, the honorific she would have merited had she stayed (and stayed alive) in Germany, where she was born in 1906. But Arendt was a Jew; after fleeing her native land in 1933, she spent the next eight years as a homeless alien in Prague, Geneva, Paris, and a detention center in Vichy France before landing in New York with her husband, Heinrich Blücher. They had, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl tells us, twenty-five dollars between them.

Another ten years passed before Arendt's statelessness came to an end when she received American citizenship. But it didn't take her that long to start carping about her host country; early on, she wrote her mentor, the philosopher Karl Jaspers, who remained in Germany, that "the fundamental contradiction of the country is political freedom coupled with social slavery." *Social slavery*? Her painful years as an exile (not to mention the indignity of an auto accident) excuse some of Arendt's wild exaggeration about and gross ingratitude toward America—but not all of it.

Whatever love she felt for America was limited to the idea of the republic she found in the writings of the Founding Fathers, and did not extend to the reality of squabbling political parties, popular culture, and vulgar egalitarians who presumed to call her 'Honey.' She was, after all, an *intellectual*, not your run-of-the-mill émigré. Never forgetting her past, she was always spotting the specter of Weimar Germany in her adopted America—during the McCarthy years, in the aftermath of Kennedy's assassination, and as recently as the early '70s, so her longtime friend Mary McCarthy tells us, when Arendt "actually talked about emigrating back to Europe *fast*, while there was still time."

It is the great virtue of Young-Bruehl's awkward but honest biography that the philosophical as well as the personal roots of Arendt's frequent and always urgent misapprehensions of reality in general, and not just of America, are laid bare—even if unintentionally. (The

* Yale University Press, $25.

Hannah Arendt in 1933, the year she left Germany.

author, a former student of Arendt's, is an admirer almost to the point of being a hagiographer.) What's clear, first of all, is that Arendt was—not to put too fine a point on it—a snob. I don't intend this characterization to be frivolous or mean-spirited. As the expression of a disenfranchised class's social insecurity, snobbery has always been an important element in the uneasy accommodation of émigré intellectuals to their host countries. Particularly so with the group of novelists, critics, and journalists known as the "*Partisan Review* intellectuals," whose number Arendt joined shortly after her arrival here in 1941, and who came to view her—and lobbied others to regard her—as the country's leading political philosopher, until her death at sixty-nine in 1975. Alienated from and combative toward America (the adopted home of many of them, the native land, after only one generation, of most of the others), the *Partisan Review* literati, as champions of modernism and opponents of conformity, were disenfranchised snobs, seemingly of the first order.

Imagine how they must have felt, then, on meeting a woman, not yet forty, who had been a student of Jaspers's and Martin Heidegger's and could quote lengthy philosophical passages at them—in the original Greek and Latin. Not for nothing were the intellectuals who had worked their way through CCNY and Columbia impressed by Arendt and her classical German education. Young-Bruehl dryly notes that this was a "time when a respected member of the *Partisan Review* circle could ask her at a party who 'Francis' Kafka was." (On the other hand, the biographer also lets slip that it was not until Randall Jarrell, an early acquaintance and admirer in this country, came along that Arendt read Auden and Yeats.)

ARENDT kept just enough distance from her newfound friends to encourage their respect. Enjoying, as she put it, "the freedom of becoming a citizen without having to pay the price of assimilation," she even went so far as to announce, in a typically grandiose obiter dictum, that "social nonconformism is the sine qua non of intellectual achievement." She thus cultivated what she called a "self-conscious pariahdom," which her biographer excuses as a form of "innocence."

This was not just an act—or, rather, it was an act taken so seriously, rationalized so elaborately in her philosophy, that it became a reality. Arendt had borrowed the idea of the Jewish "pariah"—and his opposite number, the "parvenu"—from the Dreyfusard Bernard Lazare, "whose hostility toward the Jewish leadership of his day," Young-Bruehl writes, "was exemplary in its moral clarity." Contrasting unfavorably the social consciousness of the "parvenu," whose condescending philanthropy toward less fortunate Jews emphasizes his distance from them, with the political consciousness of the "pariah," whose revolutionary affirmation of Jewish identity unites him with his brethren, Arendt did not hesitate to bite the hand that fed her, whether in the New World or the Old. During her exile in France, Arendt found a sponsor in the Baroness Germaine de Rothschild; the "pariah" philosopher repaid her "parvenu" patroness a decade later in the opening section of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which argued that the tradition of "Jewish exceptionalism" on the part of the Rothschilds and other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century parvenus contributed to the racist ideology of the totalitarian states, Germany and the Soviet Union, which systematically exterminated Jews in the twentieth century. Talk about blaming the victim!

Critics have been quick to burden Arendt with the baggage of "Jewish self-hatred," but that phrase does not do justice to her complicated philosophy and psychology. Not just complex, but contradictory: there are major inconsistencies both in her thought and between her ideas and her life, although they never seemed to give Arendt pause. She explicitly identified herself as a Jew (since totalitarian anti-Semitism, she argued, made this "the only adequate reply to the question, Who are you?"), yet she was almost totally indifferent to traditional Jewish thought. Her doctoral dissertation was on St. Augustine's concepts of love, and throughout her career she explicated the texts of Greek, Roman, and modern Catholic, Protestant, and secular philosophers. She was a passionate Zionist, spending most of her early years in exile working for various Jewish agencies, but she apparently never seriously considered emigrating to Israel, preferring the life of a "pariah" in the United States to whatever assimilation would be expected of her there.

In general, she was harshly critical of the impulse toward bourgeois assimilation, which she believed could only lead to the paradox of Jews' assimilation into anti-Semitic societies. She even went so far as to argue that "the bourgeoisie's political philosophy was always 'totalitarian'; it always assumed an identity of politics, economics and society, in which political institutions served only as the facade for private interests." Yet, from Young-Bruehl's description, Arendt was herself a comfortably bourgeois, nearly deracinated, and barely observant Jew—who was married to a Protestant. The descendant of Lithuanian Jews who had fit easily into the progressive middle-class German-Jewish society of her hometown, Königsberg, she was contemptuous of the "ghetto mentality" of such *Ostjuden* as Gideon Hausner, the prosecutor in the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, about which she wrote the *New Yorker* articles that later became the controversial *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. She extolled the virtues of the public life but was so retiring that she kept her back to the camera during one of her two appearances on television. On political grounds, she was critical of introspection, but—as a professor at Chicago and the New School for Social Research—she spent most of her later years wrapped up in her own mind.

EVEN the most sympathetic student of Arendt's work would despair at all these contradictions. One way to start coming to grips with them is to consider the book that contains most of them in a nutshell: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which made her famous in 1951. The argument of the book (a difficult and not always satisfying nut to crack) goes something like this: totalitarianism must be understood as the answer to the historical questions posed by the decay of the nation-state and the shrinking of the political world, which demand new forms of organizing people and promote expansion for expansion's sake, and by the rise of anti-Semitism and racism, which entails a new conception of mankind. The decline of the family, the interjection of the social realm between the political and the private, the intrusion of "necessity" (the vulgar concerns of merely staying alive, that is, which had hitherto been confined to the realm of the household) into the public domain—all these combined to facilitate the growth of modern mass society.

Individuals in such a society, Arendt argued, are "atomized" and "isolated"; lacking family ties and common cultural interests, they are "obsessed by a desire to escape from reality because in this essential homelessness they can no longer bear its accidental, incomprehensible aspects." Thus they are susceptible to the appeal of totalitarian movements, which "organize loneliness." Eventually such movements coalesce into bureaucratic states, whose purpose becomes "the transformation of human nature itself." This goal is ultimately and inexorably pursued through concentration camps and programs of mass extermination—which were what Arendt set out to understand at the beginning of the book.

This extraordinary vision of the organization of "radical evil" is undeniably compelling, but is it accurate? Does it really account for the history and practices of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union? And does it have anything at all to do with modern-day America, as Arendt sometimes seemed to suggest? The kindest characterization of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is that of her admirer, editor, and friend Alfred Kazin, who tactfully calls it "a stupendous literary idea." Arendt was always taken more seriously by literati, such as Kazin, Jarrell (who satirized her and Blücher as the "Dual Monarchy" of the Rosenbaums in *Pictures from an Institution*), Auden (whom Arendt declined to marry in the last years of both of their lives), and Robert Lowell, than by philosophers or political theorists. The latter have typically been suspicious of Arendt's method—or lack of it.

Young-Bruehl tries hard to explain just what that method might be. Hers is not an easy task, since Arendt's characteristic form of analysis is pitched at such a high level of generalization that one suspects, along with E. J. Hobsbawm (whom the biographer quotes even-handedly), that she had a "certain lack of interest in mere fact . . . a preference for metaphysical construct or poetic feeling over reality." In the manner of Heidegger, her first great teacher, she filled endless pages with painfully detailed etymological analyses of the texts of the major classical and modern thinkers. But Arendt was quite explicit that she did not set out to write an unworldly history of ideas, for she rejected what she regarded as the Hegelian notion that "ideas follow and generate one another in temporal succession."

An unsympathetic reader would note immediately that *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is studded with history-of-ideas hedges, which imply connections without demonstrating them: "It is, therefore, not by accident . . . ," "The happy fact is . . . ," "Nor was it an accident . . . ." Her biographer, however, had access to some previously unpublished material that gives a better idea of what Arendt was up to:

"Elements by themselves probably never cause anything," she wrote. "They become origins of events if and when they crystallize into fixed and definite forms. Then, and only then, can we trace their history backwards. The event illuminates its own past, but it can never be deduced from it."

This passage suggests Arendt's emphasis on freedom and contingency, rather than necessity, in the political domain. In itself, this is an unobjectionable notion, but it led her to adopt some bizarre positions —for example, in her controversial 1959 article "Reflections on Little Rock." Arendt had always insisted on a rigid distinction between public, social, and private; although she never articulated the "ground" (to use Heideggerian terminology) of such a separation, its implications for race relations were clear, at least to her. "The question is not how to abolish discrimination," she wrote, "but how to keep it confined within the social sphere, where it is legitimate, and prevent its trespassing on the political and personal sphere, where it is destructive." She even went on, in Young-Bruehl's words, to argue that "social discrimination, manifest in social groupings, is an important barrier against 'mass society.'"

This contention took many of her admirers by surprise, but its outline was apparent enough in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*—and explicit in *The Human Condition*, which appeared at about the same time as her "Reflections." In *Origins* she had decried "the fall of protecting class walls," cited "the breakdown of the class system" as one of those "elements" contributing to the rise of totalitarianism, and even defended slavery ("To be a slave was after all to have a distinctive character, a place in society") for freeing those lucky few in the political realm from the burdens of necessity. Meanwhile, in the lectures delivered at Princeton that were later published as *On Revolution*, she complained that what she called elsewhere the "lost treasure" of the American Revolution—its emphasis on liberty in the political sphere—had been buried by the waves of "mass immigration" from Europe, bringing to these shores people who were more interested in "liberation

from poverty" and "abundance and endless consumption" than in freedom.

It's impossible to resist noting that not all émigrés enjoyed the patronage of the Rothschilds—and that not all Jews escaped the gas chambers. To be fair, Arendt's years of exile were truly difficult—although one wonders whether any anguish justifies the arrogant condescension, smug elitism, absurd classicism, and outright snobbery that characterizes the passages above. These attitudes found their purest expression in the "stupendous literary idea" that was *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, with its negative image of the homeless "mass man"—actually Arendt's generalization of the worst elements of her own experience as an exile, a nightmare conception of modernity arrived at by exaggerating certain aspects of her eighteen years of statelessness, which, Young-Bruehl writes, "taught her the elements of political life." Arendt "crystallized" the myth of the Wandering Jew into a representation of reality—not a historical but an "ideal type," à la Weber—and used it to rationalize her own psychological defenses, notably snobbery, against the awfulness of her life as an alien.

THERE is more to Arendt's thought than simple rationalization, however. Her idealization of the public realm had its roots in her critique of the "later" Heideggerian philosophy, which—as against the vision of man in the seminal *Being and Time*—urged *Gelassenheit*, "letting Being be," a philosophical quietude that entailed accepting whatever history wanted to be, whatever contingency Being threw in the face of man. Such passivity was naturally impossible for a politically defined Jew like Arendt to embrace. Her controversial contention that Eichmann embodied the "banality of evil," which inflamed New York intellectual circles for three years in the early '60s (and which will be disputed all over again this winter, with the very belated publication of the translation of the transcripts of the Israeli police interrogations on which she relied for her picture of Eichmann as an "anonymous" bureaucratic "idealist"), was intended to demonstrate the political dangers of "just following orders"—the orders that one's superiors received from the logic of history, which had illegitimately smuggled necessity into the realm of politics. (Arendt had actually sketched the same abstract portrait of bureaucratic man fifteen years earlier in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.) The same is true of her equally controversial polemic against the *Judenräte*, the Jewish Councils, whose role in "the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story" of the Holocaust. "*It did not happen everywhere*," Arendt sternly proclaimed. It was enough that some Jews, somewhere, had *acted*, had resisted.

How? And how successfully? As she is on most matters involving real rather than ideal human history, Arendt is very vague. To her, the mere *fact* of action is what was important, is its own justification. Perhaps more than anything, this emphasis on action and "facticity" (to Continental philosophers, the arbitrary state of things' being just what they are) is the key to Arendt's thought.

As a twelve-year-old girl, Arendt was taken by her mother, Young-Bruehl reports, to the Königsberg demonstrations in support of the *Spartakusbund*, the revolutionary movement of German communists, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, which ended with their murder in 1919. Blücher, her husband-to-be, was on the barricades in Berlin. Neither ever forgot the experience; both romanticized the simple fact of "spontaneous revolution." (As Arendt wrote of Leo Jogiches, Luxemburg's spouse, "in marriage, it is not always easy to tell the partners' thoughts apart.") But neither ever really came to grips with the *real* questions of politics—such as what are the just forms of *governing*, not merely of seizing power and spontaneously performing in the political arena? (Arendt's praise for the Spartacists' "council system," besides being abstract, was rather naïve.)

Later, biography and philosophy "crystallized" for Arendt while she was a student—and lover (a relationship, well concealed until Young-Bruehl's biography, that would not have pleased the *Partisan Review* crowd)—of Heidegger's. Increasingly, as his philosophy developed, he retreated into pure thought, into mystical *Gelassenheit*. And Arendt grew ever more irritated, to put it mildly, by what she criticized in another context as "inner emigration," the "withdrawal from significant public life"—Heidegger's egregious involvement with Nazis during his rise to the rectorship of Freiburg University, just when she was leaving the country and him, and his subsequent lapse into passive disengagement, as if nothing had ever happened. By then under the spell of Blücher and the myth they shared about the heroic *Spartakusbund*, Arendt came more and more to emphasize action and revolution.

What all this meant, in concrete terms, Arendt characteristically did not say. Her comments on the New Left (which heralded her arrival at Berkeley by proclaiming, "Rosa Luxemburg has come again") give some idea of the depth of her political understanding. "What . . . really distinguishes this generation in all countries from earlier generations," she told an interviewer, "is its determination to act, its joy in action, the assurance of being able to change things by one's own efforts. . . . For the first time in a very long while a spontaneous political movement arose which not only did not simply carry on propaganda but acted, *and, moreover, acted almost exclusively from moral motives*." (Her emphasis.) About the result of such spontaneous action (nothing, as it turned out) she didn't care. All that mattered was the act.

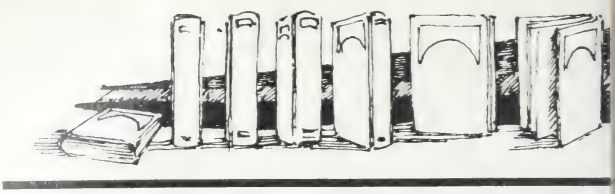
This shallow idealization of pure "facticity," of the contingent, was merely a variant of the nihilism that pushed Heidegger into the Nazis' arms. Although she idealized revo-

lution, Arendt spent most of her life in the library, the lecture hall, and her enclave on Riverside Drive. She was no more, or no less, passive than the mentor she renounced; she was no more, or no less, free from the "necessity" that she claimed to reject intellectually (as in her explication of Cicero: "I refuse to be coerced, even by truth").

Perhaps unintentionally, her literary executor and oldest American friend, Mary McCarthy, gave this sad account of the intellectual as wishful thinker: "she was somewhat inactive politically, above all when her physical participation is compared to the hyperactive state of her mind. For her, the reading of a newspaper was a political experience of a galvanic kind . . ." The pathos of such a hopeless, helpless, vicarious life, generously characterized by her biographer as the "capacity for dramatic identification with what she observed," borders on the comical. Arendt took seriously, too seriously, what Aristotle called *bios xenikon*—"the life of a stranger." And her self-imposed role of "pariah" kept her forever a foreigner, not only to her fellow intellectuals, her Jewish brethren, her homeland, and her adopted country, but to what she claimed was essential to human existence—action.

In criticizing American "aversion from conceptual thought" and susceptibility to "pseudo-scientific nonsense," Arendt once wrote: "These theories, once they had crossed the Atlantic, lost their basis of reality and with it all limitations through common sense." She might have been describing the poetic metaphysics of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. And she added what could be her own epitaph: "The reason America has shown such a ready receptivity to far-fetched ideas and grotesque notions may simply be that the human mind stands in need of concepts if it is to function at all." Functioning at all has always been difficult for the successive waves of immigrants to America, but most have managed with humility, free of snobbery and its dubious metaphysical rationale. ■

BRIEF REVIEWS



The Book of the City of Ladies, by Christine de Pizan. Translated by Earl Jeffrey Richards. Persea, 333 pages. $16.95.

CHRISTINE de Pizan was a leading French writer of her day, an intellectual, feminist, poet, and royal biographer who supported herself and three children by her writing. The astonishing aspect of this impressive career is that it took place at the turn of the fifteenth century.

In 1405, de Pizan undertook to write the first universal history of noble and virtuous women, here translated for the first time into modern, accessible English and published in a handsome edition with reproductions of the original illuminations. The narrator begins innocently enough: "One day as I was sitting alone in my study . . ." She opens a book that gives her occasion to wonder why its author, and "so many different men—and learned men among them," habitually voice "so many wicked insults about women and their behavior." She and three (female) figures of conventional allegory—Reason, Rectitude, and Justice—then sift through and calmly rebut all the male arguments about women's deficiencies. In the process they build a city where noble women can live in safety, they demolish the reputations of male writers from Ovid to Boccaccio, and they compile an eccentric encyclopedia of spirited heroines.

De Pizan's arguments are sophisticated and well buttressed, but there is no mistaking her for a modern intellectual. She gives equal billing, for example, to the women of myth (Minerva, for shorthand) and religion, and to the queens and duchesses of French history. Modern feminists may feel queasy at some of her "traditional" attitudes—not least her firm insistence that sewing is a natural womanly attribute.

But she is a shrewd and eloquent crusader in her defense of women's abilities and her refusal to accept male double standards. She bravely attacks lies that still have currency today: that women enjoy being raped, are too emotional, cannot be great scientists or artists.

In the context of art, de Pizan describes a gifted friend, Anastasia, so skilled at painting manuscript borders and miniature backgrounds that in all of Paris "people cannot stop talking about her." This detail, and many like it, vividly brings to life the swirling impatience of clever medieval women with no more time for men's insults—and this at a time when they were supposed to be holding still for courtly love. De Pizan's voice, coming clearly across the centuries, is that of a revolutionary who, despite all her pious sentiments in favor of marriage, concludes by urging all noble women faced with inadequate men to "Flee, flee, my ladies, and avoid their company." **H.R.**

When the Going Was Good!: American Life in the Fifties, by Jeffrey Hart. Crown, 320 pages. $15.95.

JEFFREY HART, the conservative columnist and former Nixon speechwriter, sets out to defend his favorite decade against the charge that it was boring—a slur concocted "during the leftist revival of the 1960s," he says. It's a juicy

assignment—in other hands (Tom Wolfe's, say) it would have produced a memorable book.

In Hart's it didn't, in part through sheer lack of effort. There are signs of a few short visits to the library, to Xerox old best-seller lists and the like, but mainly Hart relies on his own meager store of memories. Occasionally these are evocative (Columbia in the days of Trilling and Van Doren); more often they are trivial: Hemingway making small talk in a restaurant with one of Hart's friends, Hart playing tennis with former Wimbledon champion Alice Marble, various "truths" that Richard Nixon "revealed" to Hart in private conversations (sample: "You know, when the Democrats unite, and come at you all at once, they are a formidable power").

Hart seems reluctant to disturb the stream of mediocre anecdotes with much analysis. The Fifties saw "important things" happen in painting, but (as Wolfe, for one, dared to ask) were they such good things? Hart gives us details of the death of John Foster Dulles, but mounts no real defense of Dulles's cold-war actions. When he does briefly venture into foreign policy, it is to rescue Eisenhower from the praise of Hart's fellow Fifties revisionists, who emphasize Ike's wise reluctance to get involved in Vietnam. Hart prefers to picture Ike as a tough leader who (unlike Kennedy) always got his man, be he Lumumba in the Congo or Arbenz in Guatemala.

Ironically, while Hart claims to be promoting the significance of the Fifties, the decade that clearly obsesses him is the one that came after. By attempting to prove that the Eisenhower years actually "seethed with controversy," Hart accepts the basic premise of the era's critics—namely, that any decade worth living through will be controversial. So Hart misses what seems, these days, to have been the peculiar strength of the American Fifties: precisely their lack of controversy, the consensus and shared morality that enabled both government and industry to work. **R.M.K.**

Not Now but *Now*, by M.F.K. Fisher. North Point Press, 264 pages. $9.

M. F. K. FISHER was once described by a reviewer as "gorgeous enough to eat." Mrs. Fisher, of course, is our most distinguished gastronomist; as Harrison Smith, editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, said, she "approached the soul of man through his stomach." Just once, however, she whipped up a wholly fictional savory, *Not Now but* Now (1947), reissued this fall in a handsome paperback edition. Herein Mrs. Fisher cooked up a heroine gorgeous enough to make one long to be her *plat du jour*.

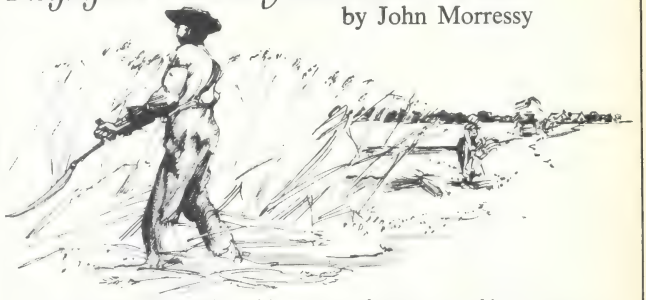
Not Now but Now chronicles Jenny, gourmande supreme—a whore with a heart of champagne sorbet, her palate always clear for the next amorous or gustatory adventure. Jenny's career is traced through four novellalike tales, impossibly spread through time à la *Orlando*. In the first (and best) of these she disrupts the bourgeois propriety of a Lausanne family in 1938. Thence on to London in 1847, an Ohio college town in 1927, California's Gold Coast in 1882. In each incarnation she's the gem with a curse, destroying those who would enjoy or own her with the inexorability of her appetite, munching her way through various lovers like a Mimi Sheraton of the bedroom.

Although the havoc wreaked by an amoral wanton is a rather dated subject today, *Not Now but* Now still has plenty of fizz. Mrs. Fisher's talent for recounting impossible repasts is well served with "truffles from Sir Harry's farm in southern France, sent in olivewood sawdust" and "haunch of antelope, aromatic as rotting wildflower stalks." Her high sense of connoisseurship extends to the rituals and costumes of drawing rooms, jazz dives, dining cars, and tea shops, elaborated in a prose of sparkling simplicity. There are few writers who have captured so well the myriad pleasures and discomforts of travel by train. In a recent essay on the Gare de Lyon (in *As They Were*, Knopf, $13.95) she speaks of the tiny voluptuous sensations we use to "cloak with compassion the anguish of departure and the dubious ecstasies of return and arrival." Then again, Jenny is the sort who knows how to enjoy herself. "She'd order a Byrrh first: it was always so good on trains, like the cream cheeses and the Cointreau afterward, sweet, sticky, horrible stuff anywhere in the world but there, and there a part of the intricate immobility of shooting across Europe with grace."

As a convincing version of eternal, evil Lilith, Jenny may not pass the mustard, but she bubbles with many of the forgotten flavors of

Negligible Literary Anecdotes No.6

by John Morressy



Leo Tolstoy was mowing with a group of peasants on his estate at Yasnaya Polyana when a distraught young man came to him, begging advice on how to live. Tolstoy laid aside his scythe, sat down with the young man, and told him. Then he got back to his mowing.

Steve Wilcox

Our apologies to John Morressy for omitting his name from last month's Literary Anecdote.

civilized life. And although Mrs. Fisher's trifle is based on stale cake, it still delights. **J.S.**

American Assassins: The Darker Side of Politics, by James W. Clarke. Princeton University Press, 344 pages. $18.50.

James W. Clarke, professor of political science at the University of Arizona, has developed a "pathological theory of assassination," and he applies it to the lives of sixteen assassins and would-be assassins of prominent American leaders. The assailants are grouped into four classifications according to declining degrees of lucidity—Sirhan Sirhan is a Type I because he was extremely shrewd, devious, unrepentant, and politically motivated; Samuel Byck, the little-known man who tried to crash-dive a jet into the Nixon White House, is a Type II because, despite his high level of anxiety, he did not suffer delusions; and Andrew Jackson's would-be killer, Richard Lawrence, was a Type IV because he was so indisputably insane.

Clarke wrote this book before John Hinckley shot President Reagan, and he was able to include only brief references to the incident in his concluding chapter. But, given the outcome of the Hinckley trial, the book may attract more readers than it would otherwise. The verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity, in fact, coincides nicely with Clarke's main thesis, which is, simply expressed, that too many assassins are conveniently pegged as lunatics.

The author vehemently indicts past studies of assassins for ignoring political context; he sees this omission as a reluctance to acknowledge the legitimacy of political grievances. Clarke also accuses his predecessors of leaning too heavily on secondary sources. He has covered himself well on this last point because he has gleaned some wonderful gems of information from less accessible medical histories and personal diaries, as well as such obvious sources as the National Archives. But his reasoning and writing do not live up to his research. Legal definitions of assassins, he feels, are too "narrowly conceived" and fail to consider nuance, yet his own groupings do little to mitigate this problem. (He takes care to warn the reader that Type II assassins are not "carbon copies" of each other, and two paragraphs later reports that they are not "just everyday folks.") He says most psychiatric diagnoses are overly subjective, but he portrays John Wilkes Booth, for example, with weirdly exaggerated sympathy. To pound home the point that Booth was much more politically motivated than is generally assumed, Clarke makes Lincoln out to be an ogre just ripe for attack—he describes him as a president who "dramatically exploited his executive authority," ruled "with the iron hand of a despot," and drafted reluctant "American boys" in what had become an "All-American holocaust." The chapter on Lee Harvey Oswald concludes by describing Oswald as "a mercurial, anxiety-ridden young man who, the facts suggest, could have been turned away from his deadly assignment with a kind word and loving embrace." It's a shame that a work based on an excellent idea, with such thorough research, is so marred by empty generalizations and bad prose. **J.B.**

Family Happiness, by Laurie Colwin. Knopf, 288 pages. $12.95.

Tolstoy said that happy families were all alike; but the family of Polly Solo-Miller (sic) Demarest, the heroine of Laurie Colwin's new novel, fills the average reader with horrified fascination, since the highly structured "happiness" they enjoy would drive most of us crazy. Which is just what's happening to Polly. She is a beautiful woman in her thirties with two charming children, a wonderful lawyer husband, a lovely home, and close ties to her relatives. She seems, on first acquaintance, to embody all her family's ideals—indeed, to be perfectly happy. Since she is the only unselfish member of her family, she and her perfection are taken completely for granted: "It always surprised Polly that other women, who were not so good at making things sweet, whose households were not so sparkling and comfortable, whose children were not so well turned out, behaved as if they, too, deserved love. . . . Polly believed that one wrong move and people ceased to love you."

In other words, Polly is the victim of a huge con job by her wildly eccentric and demanding family, and, as we enter her story, she's just beginning—with the help of her splendid lover, the embodiment of her first fall from grace—to realize it. It's our friend the mid-life crisis, combined with an old-fashioned emancipation from emotional tyranny. But for someone who's been used to being well behaved all her life, it's agony. "She often felt that her true nature had been revealed. Once she stopped striving so hard to be good, the armor fell away and she was simply the cranky, dissatisfied, and not very nice person all the rigid speculations that had been drilled into her had prevented her from being."

Polly isn't quite alone in her struggle to be loved despite imperfections. She has her artist lover and her office girlfriend, and eventually she feels less bereft inside her own family. Maintaining her Solo-Milleresque stiff upper lip, Polly fights to come to terms with her new emotions, even telling her mother where to get off in a conversation that will bring a flood of delicious recognition to anyone who has ever longed to shut up a persistent critic. In this third novel Laurie Colwin's gift for dialogue, and her ability to see a situation through the mind of a character while still remaining an observer, are better than ever; and while the book's ending is certainly optimistic, it isn't facilely happy—Polly has to face up to the consequences of her newly complex life. We should look forward to Colwin's next one. **T.G.**

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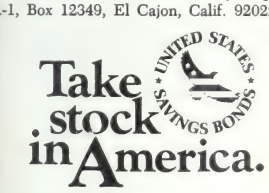
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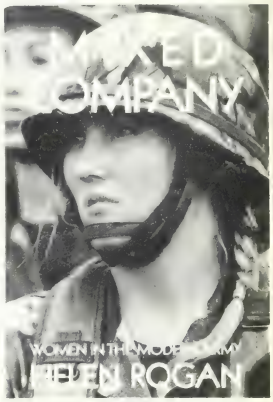
Women in the Modern Army by Helen Rogan

With women making up almost 9 percent of today's army, one question continually recurs: Can women be good soldiers? Yes, declares journalist Helen Rogan, who immersed herself for two years in the military – from basic training, to West Point, to the Pentagon. Through revealing interviews with military personnel, both male and female, as well as through records of women's participation in war, Rogan convincingly demonstrates that women soldiers face problems that have less to do with physical or mental capabilities than with the attitudes and taboos that surround them.

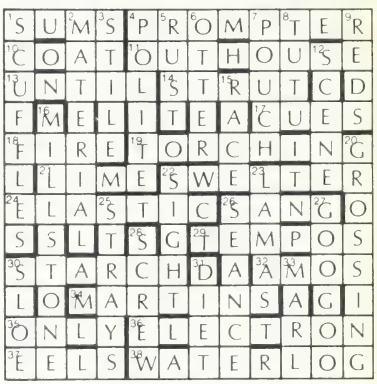
Groundbreaking. – Jane O'Reilly, *Time*

Rogan is a young woman of cool intelligence and skeptical humor and a very good writer. She is acquainted equally with the historical facts and particulars of personality. Her acquaintances make an excellent book. – John Leonard, *The New York Times*

An illuminating investigation of American service life. – *The New Republic*



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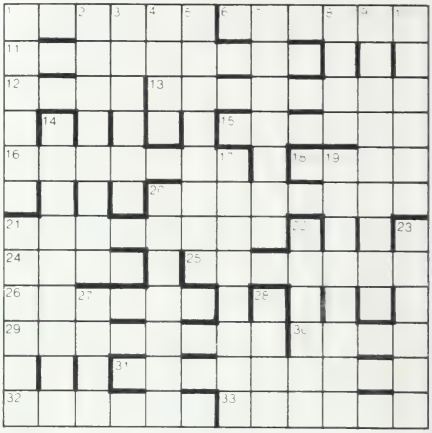
Solution to the August Puzzle

Notes for "Clubs for Clues"

Across: 1. su(it)es; 4. pro(MO)ter, anagram; 10. co(L)t; 11. nut(h)ouse, anagram; 13. unt(I)e, anagram; 14. stout, two meanings; 17. cuss, hidden; 18. firm, two meanings; 19. tou(chin)g, anagram; 21. LI(m)B; 22. sweater, anagram; 24. plastic, C-it's-a-LP reversed; 26. sane, homonym; 29. tempts, St.-P-met, reversed; 30. sear-ch; 32. amps, hidden; 34. mar-tin-I; 35. oily, hidden; 36. (s)election; 37. (w)ells; 38. waterloo(S), anagram. **Down:** 1. so-(tr)uffles; 2. maternal, anagram; 3. (F)utile; 4. O-O-lit-E; 5. oust, anagram; 6. outer, anagram; 7. p-orch.; 8. tu(rkey shoo)ts; 9. redo-(Lent); 12. s(C)ent; 15. rack, two meanings; 16. m'I (reversal)-lest-one; 20. G-rousing; 22. eight, th(GI)e reversed; 23. lamps, anagram; 25. straw-s, reversal; 26. (in)stance; 27. go-O-gol(f); 28. scree(n); 30. s(L)ow; 31. di(d)n't; 32. ear-L.

Bar Hopping

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Centigram of *Crossword*)



This month's instructions:

The definition part of each clue is normal, but the subsidiary indications (anagrams, reversals, etc.) include the letter immediately adjacent to each entry, on the other side of the bar at the beginning or the end of the entry.

Answers include four proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The answer to last month's puzzle appears on page 79.

CLUES

ACROSS

1. Fled heartless cobra's venom (6)
6. Prosecutor (or court) is overturned widely (6)
11. Gave a pat on the back and possibly the rear end (9)
12. Leak slowly . . . oh, about an ounce (English) (4)
13. Skill one shows in harness race, backing advantage given to some racers (8)
15. Assault girl and feel terrible (6)
16. Reformed tribe (S. Asian people) . . . this could go to the clergyman's head! (7)
18. Part of Ontario's lovely capital (4)
20. Fencing with this kind of clue? (8)
21. Copper could become green. Damn (8)
24. Begin has work to finish (4)
25. Slurped messily, eating head of cabbage—there's a matter of ethics here (7)
26. Lead for Bill Holden ruffled Monroe, for one (6)
29. Malleable: can be made into thin sections (8)
30. We messed with bad, bad lady (4)
31. To be truthful always, in brief I had one calorie (9)
32. Singers rendered "Sorrento" but not "The Last Love" (6)
33. Senior with joint and incense (6)

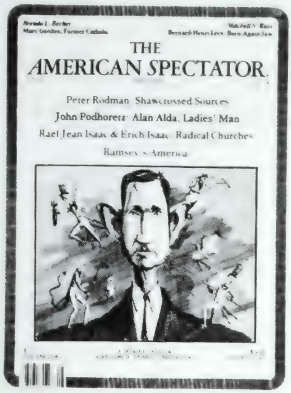
DOWN

1. Republican has home almost finished on a grand scale. Figures (6)
2. Christian and a Zen are on binge (8)
3. Empty car, with reckless speed, pancakes (6)
4. Roman emperor from old testament, raging (4)
5. Very unusual store—they sell lots (8)
7. Bachelor derides nastily in the manner of a doctor (7)
8. Sailor casually hides whale (4)
9. To be helpful, one gasped "I'm willing to date" (9)
10. Get in a strategic position (tactic in overturned bed) (6)
14. Source of warmth, of anger and status (9)
17. Kind of detective broadcast RCA ham ruined at the start (8)
19. Fold money after a small card game (8)
20. For instance, duck right after nonsense (7)
21. I let sailor inside small vessel (6)
22. Last of gin in saloon container—an insignificant amount (6)
23. Adele converts following uplifting by church official (6)
27. Sign and head off the royal guards (4)
28. Hindu writing short verse in communist article (4)

CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to Bar Hopping, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by September 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the October issue. Winners' names will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle, "What's My Line?", are Richard A. Porter, Madison, Wisconsin; Blanche Schultz, Chicago, Illinois; and Becky Swann, Lubbock, Texas.

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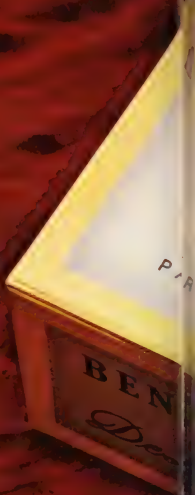
The double lives of homosexuals in politics.

by Taylor Branch

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Looking Back at Watergate

Ten years ago, strange phrases began creeping into our national vocabulary: stonewalling, deep six, limited hangout, the Big Enchilada. These phrases and others, like expletive deleted and smoking gun, came to be covered by the umbrella term of Watergate.

We look at Watergate now that ten years have passed partly because we believe with Aeschylus that time teaches many lessons, and partly because we recall Santayana's dictum that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Yet Santayana was only half right. Remembering what happened is not enough. We also need to know *why*.

In this tenth anniversary year of Watergate many people remember that the system worked the way the founding fathers intended. But we knew that at the time. Indeed, right after one president resigned, the new president announced: "Our long national nightmare is over. Our Constitution works."

Yes, it worked. But why?

Certainly the courts, the congressional committees, and the special prosecutor were important. But none of them would have been effective if they were not supported by the people.

When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of turning over Oval Office tape recordings, the President was forced to comply because the people demanded it. Another president, Andrew Jackson, successfully ignored a Supreme Court decision against his plan to move American Indians west of the Mississippi. "Justice Marshall made his decision," Jackson thundered. "Now let him enforce it." Jackson succeeded because he had public backing. During Watergate the people backed the courts.

The people supported gavel-to-gavel TV coverage of the Senate Watergate hearings because of their desire to know for themselves what happened. Support was so great that the hearings received better ratings than the soap operas they pushed off the air.

The House impeachment committee announced it would not go to court to enforce its subpoena of Watergate tapes. The subpoena could have been ignored. It wasn't because the people supported the committee.

When the Watergate special prosecutor was fired and his office abolished, it was public protest that forced the office to be reopened and a new special prosecutor appointed. The new prosecutor had no statutory tenure. He could have been fired as well. He wasn't because the people would not have stood for it.

Had the people viewed the actions of the courts, Congress, or the special prosecutor as unfair or unwise, the President could have ignored those actions. The people would have supported him. The people judged otherwise and the system worked.

A decade's passage of time has prompted many to write where-are-they-now stories about those who took part in the Watergate drama. But Watergate a decade later is not about them. It's about all of us as Americans. And what we learn from Watergate tells us more about ourselves than about our system. Watergate teaches us that only an informed, interested citizenry can ensure that the system works. It's a lesson we never can learn too well.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

Harper's

OCTOBER 1982 FOUNDED IN 1850/VOL. 265, NO. 1589



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LETTERS



But is it Art?

To credit the good intentions of Edward Banfield in his "Art Versus Collectibles" [*Harper's*, August] need not diminish one's awe at the tenacity with which he protects his intellectual innocence of the subject and the art world. According to Banfield, for example, the late Nelson Rockefeller sought to "bring art to the people" by means of high-quality reproductions priced between $65 and $7,500 (before his death this price spread had increased to $18,000). The author singles out an $850 reproduction of a Picasso painting as exemplary in this project. The fact is that Rockefeller was quite open about his primary motive, which was to make money. Only from the perspective of a Rockefeller or Harvard professor of government is an $850 reproduction within the financial means of "the people." It never seems to have occurred to either that for far less than $850 anyone could then, and can now, buy a top-quality authentic print or drawing by any number of major artists living or dead. Banfield does not mention that Rockefeller "mass-produced" his reproductions in *limited editions*, and that his salespeople often quietly assured prospective buyers that these reproductions were good investments! And how can Banfield square his concept of art for the people with Rockefeller's $18,000 recasting of Remington's "Coming Through the Rye"?

Banfield is annoyed at our proposal to outlaw exact reproductions in order to prevent counterfeiting. He claims we would prevent top-quality reproductions. We would prohibit exact-size replication, but this has nothing to do with the *quality* of the reproduction. Banfield argues that there should be government subsidies for widespread top-quality reproductions in order to increase the supply of art. Apart from the fact that more than 150,000 living artists produce a generous supply of art today, what market evidence is there that the current public need is not being met? If it is not, and there is the demand Banfield implies, why shouldn't this still be the business of private enterprise?

It never occurs to Professor Banfield that millions flock to major exhibitions of older art not because of the price tag or insurance value of the canopic mask of King Tut or the Book of Kells, but because they thirst for direct contact with the past and the true. In our society works of art are the last handmade objects of cultural value, and the public knows this. People instinctively want the original because, in Auden's words, through art we "are able to break bread with the dead, and without communion with the dead a fully human life is impossible."

ALBERT ELSEN
Walter A. Haas Professor of Art History
JOHN MERRYMAN
Sweitzer Professor of Law
The "Two Stanford Professors"
Stanford, Calif.

It matters less to me whether Edward Banfield's provocative article "Art Versus Collectibles" might have been ghost-written than that his argument for replicating works of art has been constructed on such an unfortunate misunderstanding of the value of aesthetics. Apart from willful destruction, a masterpiece cannot be devalued. Its intrinsic worth is integral and immutable. What *can* be diminished, however, is its extrinsic merit, whose appreciation resides in the beholder. Great art is the celebration of great minds. It can no more be duplicated than its creators can be cloned.

If, as Mr. Banfield maintains, "the fundamental economic fact about art is that works of high quality are scarce in relation to the demand for them," how can we hope to remedy this imbalance by lowering the quality of what is presented to the public? If the demand for fine art is truly substantial, why not satisfy it by supporting artists who can create it with appropriate payment for their products? A culture that wants beautiful art will have it, but it will have to reject ersatz modes. If that culture chooses to live with work from the past, opting to "replicate" the security of established pieces rather than investing in present and future iconography, that culture will restrict itself to the past. If it wants to risk confronting equivalent new images, it must support more than art that can easily be copied.

During the past several decades, in fact, that consideration has indeed influenced painting and sculpture. Many of the actual pieces are disappointing compared with their glossy reproductions. Their surfaces are thin and mean, lacking the nuances and generous tactile gratifications that are some of the most important, least acknowledged qualities in art of the prephotographic era.

The essence of real beauty is that it is unique while simultaneously being capable of conveying excitement and fulfillment to an infinite range of minds and temperaments separated chronologically as well as geographically. Such art binds the collective memory, articulating the weight, wit, and joy in the complexities of human experience.

Attempting to dilute a concentration in order to spread it around will not satisfy the desire for quality, but mock and prevent it. Those who truly want to meet Rembrandt as he revealed himself in his portraits will pay the price, whether it involves relocation, air fare, or admission to a local museum. They will know what the trip is worth because they've made it.

BARBARA KERSTETTER
Washington, D.C.

I became sympathetic to Edward Banfield's thesis several years ago, at the time I developed a taste for the exquisite "Les Maîtres de l'Affiche." These miniature lithographs of famous posters produced by the renowned Chaix in the nineteenth century are often unavailable at the "finer" dealers, who inform me when I ask that they deal only in "originals." True aesthetic pleasure is also experienced by those fortunate individuals who own chromotypogravure drawings by Toulouse-Lautrec published in *Le Mirliton*, *Le Rire*, *Le Courrier Français*, and other journals during the great artist's lifetime. Can anyone who professes the capacity to be stimulated or exalted by art deny the value of these *dessins*, which are touchstones for the entire body of Lautrec's work, even though



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they have not earned the appellation "original"?

C. N. Somers
Mount Pleasant, Mich.

I am a wreck! All my "Mona Lisa" fakes face offstage right, as does the one in the Louvre! And here, in your magazine, is "the real thing" facing offstage left. What will we do?

In addition, I am plagued with questions. Am I an "art historian" because I noticed, a "pedant" for pointing it out, or a "critic" because I just *had* to let you know that I know?

"Art Versus Collectibles" takes some nice shots at the real fakes in the art world. Thanks.

Dr. N. Graham Thatcher
Rapid City, S.D.

Over to you

Alexander Cockburn's "critique" of the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report" ["The Tedium Twins," *Harper's*, August] left me dumbfounded; is the program really just "vacuous dither"? If so, what language do we reserve for describing, say, "Good Morning, America"? Given the truly empty pretense of "state-of-the-art" network news, Cockburn's criticisms seem oddly ill tempered.

If MacNeil and Lehrer are actually "very bad interviewers, usually ignorant and always timid," what does one call those mainstream middlebrow commentators whose careers and reputations are forged in commercial compromise? I am simply amazed at Mr. Cockburn's perspective. His claim that the plethora of opposing viewpoints on "MacNeil/Lehrer" just adds to the burden of ambiguity, so as to make the viewer "not care at all," is just so much intellectual garbage. Here's a man made uncomfortable by too many points of view, anxious by uncertainty, and sleepy by notions of moral relativism.

Mark Green
Boulder, Colo.

Any of us who may have felt guilty about not watching the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report" more regularly will be relieved to learn from Alexander Cockburn that this reprehensible program does not warrant our attention after all. I was shocked to learn that the broadcast has given ample time to advocates of slavery, cannibalism, the crucifixion of Christ, Attila the Hun, Pol Pot, Nixon, John D. Rockefeller, Hitler, nuclear power, oil exploration, and rebuilding the navy, but has shortchanged the spokesmen of opposing points of view.

It is odd, though. Even my friends who watch fairly regularly can recall having seen only two or three of those programs.

Mr. Cockburn reveals that MacNeil "desperately tries to suppress debate and substantive argument" as each program nears its conclusion. Do Mr. Cockburn's standards require substance in his own critiques, or is precious parody enough?

Michael E. Hobbs
Alexandria, Va.

My worst fears have now been realized after reading Alexander Cockburn's article on the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report." Mr. MacNeil is accused of: 1) being Canadian (we know what *that* means); 2) crouching like Kermit the Frog (a gratuitous personal attack); 3) telling the truth (why should this so disturb Mr. Cockburn?); 4) having treacle in his veins (another personal attack, but even if it could be proven no one should be discriminated against on such a basis); and 5) being a bore (a matter of opinion).

The "MacNeil/Lehrer Report" has carved out a unique niche in broadcast journalism. If it does not assuage the viewer with the illusion that the complexities and controversies of twentieth-century life can be wrapped up in a nightly opinion, and if Mr. Cockburn interprets this as leaving the viewer hanging, then so be it.

Marion Moses
Baltimore, Md.

Alexander Cockburn's article hits the proverbial nail on the head. Listening to the questions being deferentially asked of the program participants, I have often wished I were in the studio and in a position to make the responders squirm a bit more and, for Pete's sake, just for once, to get them to say something substantive and to the point.

The only question I have for Mr. Cockburn is why he singled out the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report" for his satire on "in-depth" news reporting. Why not, too, such long-running, popular "in-depth" news programs as "The Newsmakers," "Meet the Press," and "Face the Nation"?

Harold Swanson
Bronx, N.Y.

Address

That James Wolcott does not appreciate Otis Ferguson as he should ["Where Critics Go Wrong," *Harper's*, August] is his loss; that you didn't publish the address of the publisher of *The Otis Ferguson Reader* is ours. Assuming the raffish Mr. Wolcott has no objection, we remain: December Press, 3093 Dato, Highland Park, Ill. 60035.

Curt Johnson



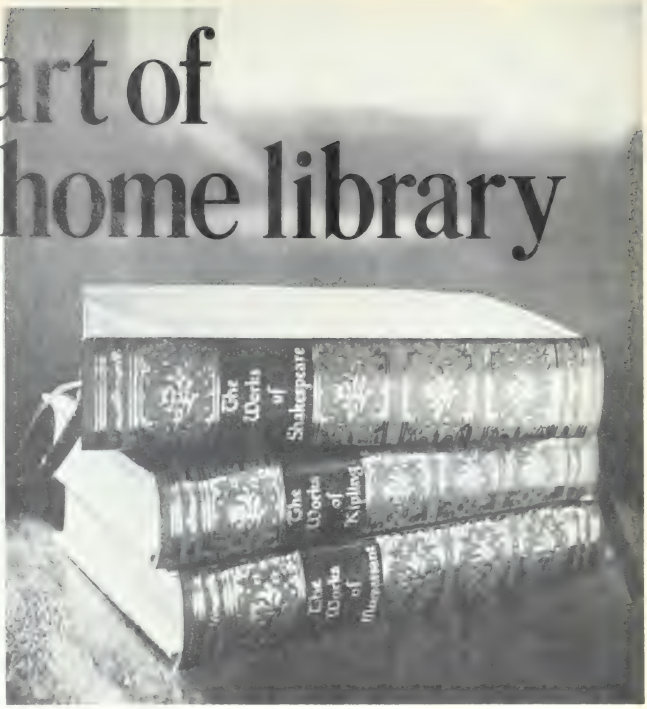
Report from the Letters Lady

We've received quite a few inquiries about the lack of authors' replies to letters discussing or criticizing their articles. No, we haven't given them up altogether (viz., Ron Rosenbaum in September), but we are running them less frequently than before. If an author is anxious to write a reply, or if we feel a criticism or accusation demands rebuttal, we will act accordingly; but there seems little point in prolonging in print what may be unbridgeable disagreements.

Now, flying in the face of my own argument, I should point out on Hugh Kenner's behalf that he was not mistaken when he charged Jim Quinn (in "The Word Police," June) with misspelling Murray Gell-Mann's name in his book *American Tongue in Cheek*. In the Pantheon hardcover edition the name is indeed misspelled. Quinn did his check on the Penguin paperback. There's a prolonged disagreement for you.

James J. Nelson of Tokyo cannot bring himself to address his note to someone called the Letters Lady. I, likewise, cannot bring myself to address my remarks to Dear "Brutus," which is how Mr. Nelson, for some reason, heads his notepaper. Mr. Nelson does not "see the value of some anonymous 'Lady' telling people they are vitriolic and churlish." I, in turn, do not see the value of hundreds of people telling us we are "disgusting," "inhuman," "repulsive," and so forth, yet these were the kinds of epithets people were using to describe us in the first few months after the magazine began to change. I'm happy to say that readers now seem to understand better what we're trying to do, even if they don't always agree with us. ■

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THE GRANDFATHER CLAUSE SOCIETY

by Michael Kinsley

As opportunities narrow, the spirit of "I got here first" is sweeping the country.

RENT control in New York City and Proposition 13 in California are at opposite ends of the country and seemingly come from opposite ends of the political spectrum. But they both represent an unhealthy spirit that is growing in our society: the spirit of the grandfather clause.

The "grandfather clause" is a legal term originally applied to passages in some Southern states' constitutions that exempted from voter literacy and property requirements anyone whose ancestors had voted before 1867 (i.e., white people).

Today, the term "grandfather clause" is used to describe any legal provision that exempts people from some change in the rules simply because they got there first. The grandfather-clause spirit can be seen in any number of modern social arrangements that preserve or extend benefits for early arrivals.

New York City rent controls began during World War II and continued after other wartime price controls were dropped. In 1971 the city decided that holding rents to World War II levels was doing more harm than good, discouraging new housing construction and encouraging deterioration of the existing housing stock. But it was politically impossible simply to end rent control. Too many people were enjoying it, however much harm it was doing to the city as a whole. So current tenants were "grandfathered" in. Now, when a rent-controlled apartment changes hands, it enters a different legal maze called "rent stabilization," under which an apartment rent can be raised a substantial amount for each new tenant, and a smaller amount (though more than for a rent-controlled apartment) during a tenancy, all according to complex formulas that lead to constant strategem and litigation.

As a result of these rules, how much one pays for a New York City apartment depends far more on how long one has lived there than on the quality of the apartment itself. A large duplex on Fifth Avenue may cost a longtime resident less than what a newcomer pays for a small one-bedroom place in a less fashionable part of town. As a recent arrival, I have frequent opportunities for self-pity in this regard. A related result is that no one ever gives up an apartment lease, preferring to stay in unsuitable quarters, to engage in elaborate subleasing subterfuges, or even to leave an apartment empty rather than lose the benefits of being "controlled." Another elaborate set of rules ensures that if the owner wants to convert a building to a condominium or cooperative, the existing tenants can either prevent it and preserve their low rents, or buy their apartments at a bargain price.

THE political flavor of rent control is left-wing: ostensibly a matter of protecting poor people against rapacious landlords. California's Proposition 13, by contrast, was considered a great demonstration of resurgent conservatism when it passed by referendum in 1978. Most of the attention at that time focused on the rollback of property taxes to their levels of many years earlier, before the California real-estate boom. But the law also provides that property taxes cannot increase by more than 2 percent a year *until a house changes hands*. Then it may be reassessed up to its present market value, and the taxes raised accordingly.

As a result, just as with apartment rents in New York, the owners of identical houses next door to each other in California may pay wildly differing property taxes, depending on when they arrived. In effect, earlier arrivals are grandfathered into a tax bargain, while newcomers must bear an ever larger share of the burden of financing schools and roads and other local expenses.

Californians have not lived with Proposition 13 long enough yet to have developed anything like the

peculiar rent-control culture of New York, and perhaps they lack New Yorkers' special zest for playing the angles. But already Proposition 13 has begun to pervert the state housing market, as "empty nesters" find that moving to a smaller place will actually cost them money, and brokers develop schemes for transferring houses without transferring title.

An especially amusing outbreak of the grandfather-clause spirit occurred recently in Newport Beach, California, in the heart of conservative Orange County. Many of the lovely large houses there are built on land owned by the Irvine Company. The homeowners signed agreements leasing the land from Irvine for an annual rent of 6 percent of the property's market value—to be reappraised after twenty-five years. Those twenty-five-year terms are starting to expire, and in the interim the properties have become spectacularly valuable. But the homeowners feel quite strongly that, having gotten a bargain for twenty-five years, they shouldn't have to pay inflated prices like some newcomer. So they have formed something called the "Committee of 4,000" to try to prevent Irvine from raising the land rents.

A recent Committee of 4,000 mailing makes the usual rent controllers' plea that unless rents are held down, "only multimillionaires will be able to live here." In support of this noble cause, the workers and peasants of Newport Beach are invited to "a gala dinner-dance (black tie optional) . . . a fun evening with gourmet wines and cuisine . . . dancing to an 18-piece orchestra playing our favorite tunes from the '50s . . . all for $50 apiece." Ah, yes—the '50s. Orange County's golden age. That was before the Irvine Company was bought by a group headed by a Michigan real-estate developer named Allen Taubman. It's hard not to sense a Merchant of Venice motif in this sentence from the Committee's letter: "We are the people who built this community, and now some fast-buck people from Detroit are trying to make a killing at our expense."

AT THE end of its most recent term, the United States Supreme Court invalidated two very different state policies, both of which represented outbreaks of I-got-here-first fever. The most interesting case, *Zobel* v. *Williams*, involved the state of Alaska's decision to use up some of its billions in oil revenue by sending checks to its citizens. The formula was simple: $50 a year for every year you've lived there. A brand-new arrival would get nothing; a resident since statehood in 1959 would get $1,050 in the first year, which was supposed to be 1981. The state offered a lot of implausible explanations for such an arrangement, but the real motive of Alaska's legislators was obviously a chauvinistic feeling that newcomers weren't as entitled to share in the oil windfall as those who had been around for a while. The court ruled that this scheme violates the equal-protection clause of the Constitution.

The other case, *Fidelity Federal Savings & Loan* v. *de la Cuesta*, once again involved California real estate. Most home mortgages contain a provision known as a "due-on-sale clause," in which the homeowners agree to settle up with the bank when they sell the house. If there is a due-on-sale clause, you cannot pass your mortgage on to the buyer.

In the boom of the late 1970s, as house prices and interest rates took off, this became a major annoyance to people trying to sell their houses. They wished to reap the inflation-induced profits from their real estate, but inflation-induced high interest rates were making it hard to find buyers. Not to worry. In 1978 the California Supreme Court stepped in and ruled, with great imagination, that due-on-sale clauses were unenforceable as "restraints against alienation"—an arcane property-law concept ordinarily of no interest to anybody except recent law graduates studying for the bar exam. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled this June, however, that, at least in the case of federally chartered institutions, the federal policy takes precedence in such matters. And the Federal Home Loan Bank Board has a policy in favor of due-on-sale clauses.

The more mortgage money that is freed up from long-term fixed-rate mortgages, the bigger the pool available for relending at current rates, and the lower those rates are likely to be. The California court, in trying to help homeowners weasel out of their due-on-sale agreements, was serving the interests of those who had already benefited from low interest rates and rapid escalation in values, at the expense of current and potential home buyers.

OF COURSE the biggest grandfather-clause arrangement of all is the Social Security system. Today's retirees are being supported at a level that will be impossible to maintain when today's younger workers are ready to retire. By that time there will be too many retirees and not enough active workers. Everyone knows this. The question is not whether benefits will be reduced, but how. The sensible approach would be to make minor adjustments starting now, to ease the transition. Asking present retirees, who are getting far more out of the system than they put in, to share the burden of adjustment is also fairer to future retirees, who are putting in far more than they will ever get out. But any suggestion that today's benefits be reduced in any way—or even that they not increase faster than the average worker's wages—sets off the Claude Pepper Tabernacle Choir singing "Shoot if you must this old gray head!" and the suggester soon slinks away abashed.

A preview of the shape Social Security reform is likely to take came last year, when President Reagan proposed to eliminate the Social Security "minimum benefit." This provision overrides normal benefit formulas to guarantee a certain minimum level of support for those who have paid very little into the system before retiring. The original purpose of the minimum benefit was to assure that old people don't starve.

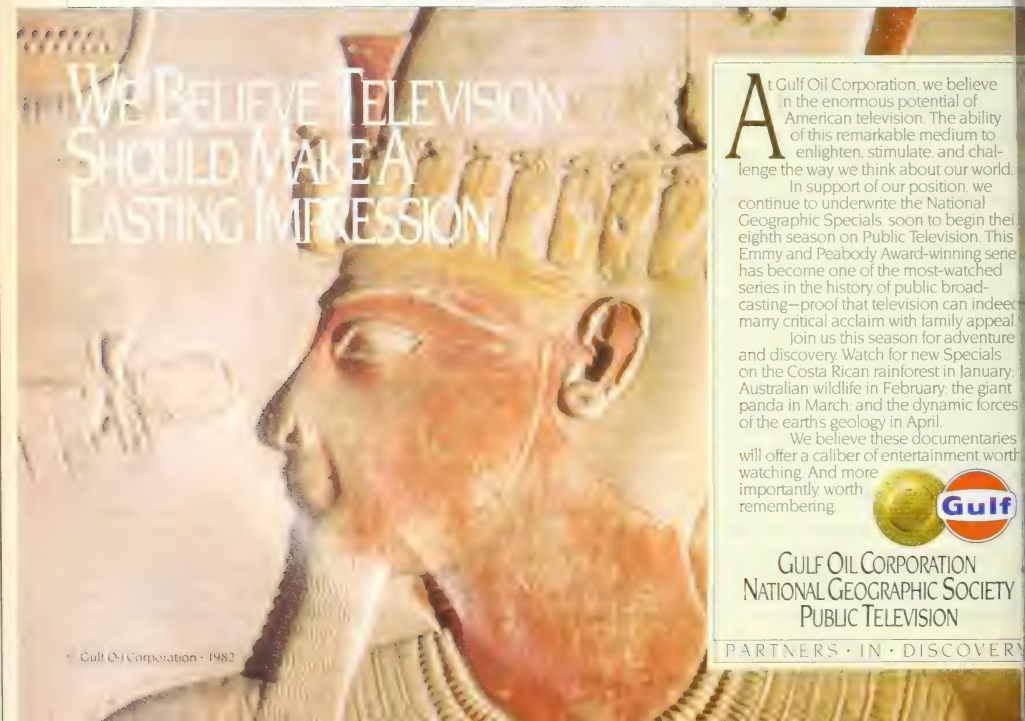
But more recent social programs offer more generous help to old people with no other means of support. Many recipients of the minimum benefit are retired civil servants and other comfortably off people who paid very little to Social Security because they spent most of their working lives outside the system. They have retirement arrangements of their own, and the Social Security check is just gravy. But the very day Reagan's budget bill passed the House, with a $1 billion annual saving by eliminating the minimum benefit, a bill was passed restoring the minimum benefit *for current recipients only*. The Senate and the White House went along.

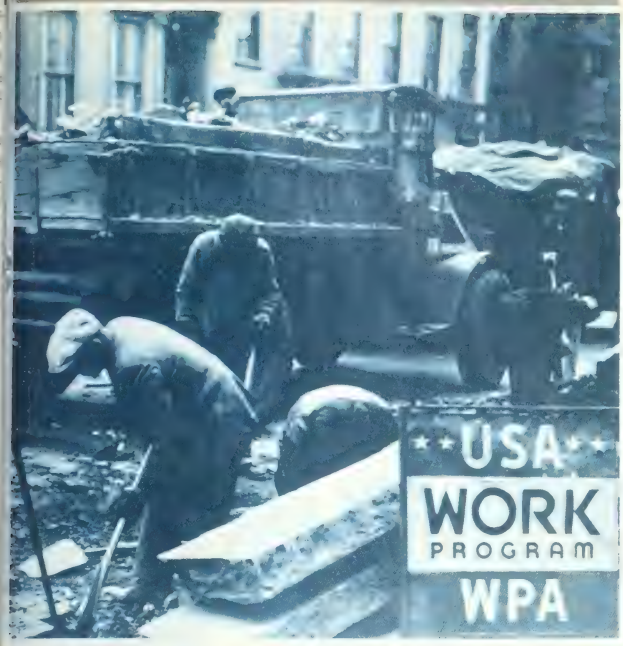
This past summer, the Republican Party ran TV commercials showing a postman delivering "Social Security checks with the 7.4 percent cost-of-living raise that President Reagan promised." At the same time, the Census Bureau announced that median family income for the nation as a whole did not keep up with the cost of living over the past year. In fact, it dropped 3.5 percent in real terms. Figures like these suggest what's dangerous about the grandfather-clause mentality. America at the moment seems to be a land of shrinking opportunity. This is obviously a cause of people's political single-mindedness in attempting to hang on to whatever they've got. But, more insidiously, it's also in part an effect of the same national frame of mind. The grandfather-clause mentality is creating a giant stasis machine, preventing the government and the economy from making the kind of adjustments necessary to preserve prosperity for all of us.

Grandfather-clause issues come masquerading as right-wing causes and left-wing causes, but in fact the grandfather-clause mentality undermines political goals of both the Right and the Left. The Right wants an economy where the free market allocates scarce resources efficiently, where risk is encouraged and rewarded. Grandfather-clause thinking clogs the wheels of the economy —look at the New York housing market—and rewards complacency rather than daring. Reform of government entitlement programs, another right-wing goal, is also impossible if it proceeds on the premise that no particular individual will be hurt.

Seen properly from the Left, the grandfather-clause mentality seems reactionary, unfair, and inegalitarian. It is the spirit of "Them what has, gets." Why should some beneficial arrangement continue just because it already exists? Why should one household pay thousands less in property taxes than its neighbor? Why should benefits and advantages be compounded rather than spread around?

America has always prospered on tumult and change. We want a society where heights are available to climb, and also to fall from. At the same time, we want, or we ought to want, a society that offers a reasonable level of protection and comfort to those who have climbed and fallen, or been unable to climb. Grandfather-clause thinking subverts the first goal and parodies the second. ■





JOBS FOR EVERYONE

by Robert M. Kaus

There's work to do, and there are people who need work.

I don't like the make-work idea. . . . But government could, with actual needed public works, use those public works in times of unemployment. WPA—some people have called it boondoggle and everything else—but, having lived through that era and seen it—no, it was probably one of the social programs that was most practical in those New Deal days. So, if government, instead of inventing these new programs, had a backlog of government projects, and they would say, "Well, now, this is the time to put those into effect," I think it could be most helpful.

—Ronald Reagan, candidate for president, interviewed on "CBS Morning News," October 23, 1980

THE IDEA seems so sensible that even Ronald Reagan, in an off-guard moment, appeared to endorse it. There are people who need work and there is work that needs doing: why shouldn't the government hire the people to do the work?

Now is an appropriate moment to ask what is wrong with something that seems like so much common sense. Unemployment, at around 10 percent, is at the highest rate since the Depression. The *number* of unemployed has actually reached Depression-era levels, with over 11 million people out of work. At the same time, we are suddenly noticing that the nation's "infrastructure"—roads, railbeds, canals, waterworks, and so on—is collapsing. No one who has driven around the country recently needs to see the figures, but they are impressive: $700 billion between now and 1990 for repairs and construction to prevent highway transportation from deteriorating; $47.6 billion to repair almost half our nation's bridges that are unsafe or obsolete; $75 billion to $110 billion over the next two decades to maintain existing water systems.

So why not put the unemployed to work repairing the sagging infrastructure, just as the Work Projects Administration put them to work building much of that infrastructure fifty years ago? Some of the necessary jobs may require construction skills, but many others don't. How long does it take to learn how to scrape rust, dig ditches, paint a bridge, or fill potholes? Public-works employment certainly seems better than the obvious alternatives—handing out unemployment insurance and welfare checks. The taxpayers would at least be getting something for their money.

The idea is so simple that the sophisticated mind senses there must be something wrong with it. And indeed, in the half-century since the WPA, the government has made no serious attempt to solve the enduring problem of unemployment by simply putting people to work. The Employment Act of 1946 declared "maximum" employment to be an official federal policy, but this was generally interpreted to sanction Keynesian fiscal fiddling for general prosperity. Until the 1970s, the government did little in the way of direct job creation (though it did build the largest public-works project in history, the interstate highway system).

In 1971 the Nixon administration started what became the CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program, which at its peak in 1978 employed 750,000 people—out of 6.1 million unem-

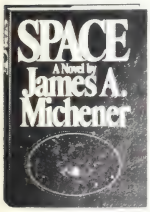
Photograph: WPA workers on a street-widening project, ca. 1935.

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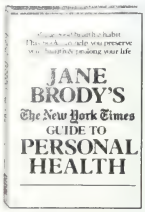
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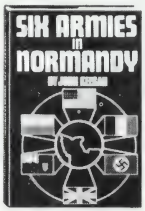
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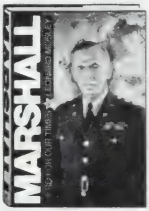
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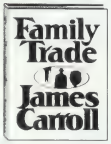
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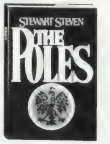
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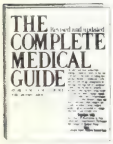
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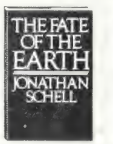
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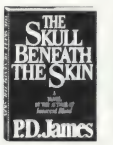
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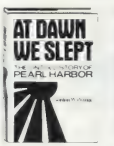
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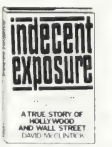
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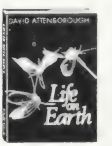
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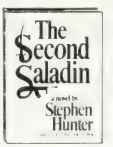
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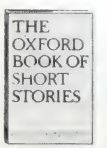
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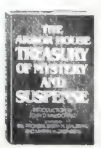
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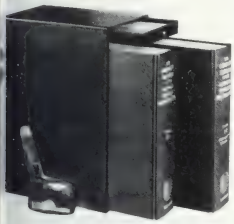
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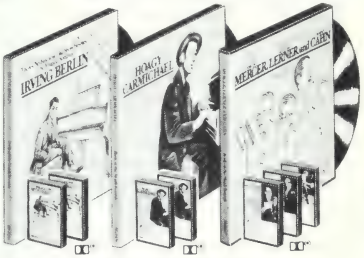
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ployed—in a variety of mainly white-collar "public service" jobs. But even the now defunct CETA jobs program retained the pretense that it was really training people for the private sector. The Humphrey-Hawkins Act, passed with much ado in 1978, once again declared a government "goal" of full employment, but as in 1946, the exercise was purely hortatory.

The usual objections to a government-guaranteed jobs program are that it would be inflationary, that it would involve "make-work" rather than producing any useful return for the taxpayers, and that it would increase the size of the government at a time when resources are urgently needed for private investment. But the real barriers to a WPA revival come from our present political paralysis more than any flaw in the idea itself.

FRANKLIN Roosevelt had several advantages that we don't enjoy today in his efforts to put Americans to work on government projects. First, he didn't have to worry that the economy would recover before any of the projects got under way. Today's policymakers complain that by the time a worthwhile public-works jobs program can be geared up, the typical modern recession is over. Many of the public-works projects authorized in response to the recession of 1975, they point out, were actually built in 1978, at the height of the recovery, when the extra government spending only aggravated inflation.

The most valuable sorts of public-sector projects, particularly construction projects, need to be planned, while the jobs that can be created quickly are usually among the least important—painting park benches, raking leaves, and the like. Pumping money into the economy through tax cuts, demand-side economists say, will end recessions long before any WPA-type crew breaks ground on a new highway.

But this complaint reflects, in large part, not the efficiency of modern economics but the inefficiency of modern government. It may take present-day public-works projects two to four years to go from discussion to groundbreaking (or longer: New York City's Westway is still unstarted after eleven years). But Roosevelt's WPA did considerably better, putting about 2.7 million Americans to work, mostly on construction projects, within five months. New Deal project planners worked in ignorance of the wonders of advanced jurisprudence, with its ability to bottle up any government endeavor in years of litigation. The WPA filed no Environmental Impact Statements; it did not worry about snail darters.

The New Dealers also benefited from a refreshingly limited conception of federalism. The WPA was specifically designed *not* to be a program that dispensed money to the states. It was a federal program; WPA field offices were staffed by federal officials, and WPA workers received federal paychecks. Projects were approved by the president.

In contrast, modern public-works programs are inevitably influenced by the "new federalist" ideas first propounded by Richard Nixon and revived by Ronald Reagan. This delegation of power appeals to conservatives; it also reflects the entrenched political power of governors and mayors. But it means there is no guarantee that local governments won't simply use federal funds for projects they were planning anyway. (This was one problem with CETA.) At best, job-creation money trickles down through two or three layers of state and local government, multistate development organizations, local planning councils, or nonprofit community organizations before it is finally spent.

Even if there are faster ways to end recessions than by public-works spending (something the current administration seems intent on disproving), a "recovery" does not necessarily mean full employment. Indeed, the level of unemployment during relatively good times—so-called structural unemployment—has been steadily increasing, from 3.5 percent in 1969 to 4.9 percent in 1973 to 5.8 percent in 1979. At no time in recent memory has the private sector alone been able to provide adequate employment at tolerable levels of inflation.

ONE way to stop worrying about the inevitable "lag" in public-works programs, then, would be to take the suggestion of (among others) MIT economist Lester Thurow and make a public-works jobs program permanent, a cure for "structural" as well as "cyclical" unemployment. A jobs program directed at repairing the infrastructure would support just such a long-term commitment. Plans for repaving highways, patching sewers, and fixing roadbeds could be drawn up, authorized by Congress, and placed on the shelf, to be taken down in bad times. Major projects would be continuous, with work accelerated during times of slack employment elsewhere. Purchasing materials during slumps—when industries are stuck with idle plants and willing to quote bargain prices—could also reduce dramatically the cost of public works.

But FDR had other advantages. The Depression, to be blunt about it, produced a relatively high class of unemployed. With a third of America out of work in the 1930s, even the most competent and conscientious workers were unable to find a job. The current recession is so severe that many prime workers—particularly in the declining industries of the Northeast—are now finding themselves in that nostalgic situation. But a permanent government jobs program, designed to reduce unemployment in good times as well as bad, would have to be prepared to employ those least desirable workers at the bottom of the employment market—high school dropouts, welfare cases, even addicts and ex-criminals.

Reduced on-the-job efficiency would be inevitable. Workers who didn't want to work, who showed up for work drunk, who started fights, could be fired—although, if the government did the hiring and firing, that would require relaxing our currently overprotective civil-

service laws. Projects could also be contracted out to regular private construction firms, who would agree to hire the unemployed, and who would have a financial incentive to require their employees to produce. But one way or another, the public would have to pay for a cadre of supervisors willing to work with labor-market leftovers.

The now expired CETA program, employing the hard-to-employ in public-service jobs rather than hard construction jobs, cost an average of $9,000 per position, including the wage. But CETA supervision was generally regarded as inadequate. Traditional public works have cost approximately $22,000 for every job created, a reflection, in part, of the fact that less than half of every construction dollar goes to labor (the rest goes for lumber, concrete, etc.). Putting the hard-to-employ to work at relatively labor-intensive tasks like paint-scraping—so-called soft public works—should cost somewhere in between these two figures. Even using the $12,000-per-job estimate that is the basis for the job-creation bill drafted by the Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives, the numbers begin to add up: $12 billion for every million jobs.

This doesn't necessarily mean that a federal public-works jobs program is unworkable—just expensive. The expense would be mitigated by saving unemployment and welfare benefits, and some tax revenues from the employees. More important, the money would produce something: needed repairs of the nation's infrastructure. These repairs are investments, like any other, and can lead to a productive return. *The New York Times* reported, in one oft-mentioned example, that U.S. Steel Corporation spends a million dollars a year rerouting its trucks around an unsafe bridge in Pittsburgh. Not to repair this bridge because doing so involves government spending rather than private business activity is shortsighted, to say the least.

One way to hold down the expense of public-works jobs, of course, is by holding down the wages the workers are paid. There are powerful reasons, aside from saving money, why we would want compensation in WPA-type projects to be relatively austere. Low wages would help ration jobs to those who needed them most, without complicated "means tests" and their attendant bureaucratic procedures. (How many millionaires are going to apply for $9,000-a-year ditch-digging assignments?) Also, since most jobs and growth in our economy must come from private enterprise, the federal government should not be such a generous employer of last resort that workers are discouraged from leaving its embrace. Roosevelt ordered WPA wages set at "larger than the amount now received as a relief dole, but at the same time not so large as to encourage the rejection of opportunities for private employment." Today, Roosevelt's principle would be elaborated over 300 pages in the *Federal Register*, but the principle still makes sense.

AND HERE, more than anywhere else, is the rub—for there are powerful monied interests that would oppose such a principle, however sensible it might seem. Although they prefer to exercise their power quietly, in the back rooms, these lobbyists have succeeded in frustrating recent efforts at providing truly useful work for the unemployed at sensible wages. They are all the more effective because they tend to be not conservative Republicans but staunch Democrats. They are the unions.

Unions are a fifth column arrayed against public-sector jobs. In general, of course, American labor would benefit from a massive federal jobs program, since unemployment tends to hold down wages. And many unions appear to support such programs—the AFL-CIO is a current booster of public works, for example. But individual unions are also frightened, with good reason, that jobs programs will undercut their own customary wage scales. This is particularly true of construction unions and municipal employee unions like the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Skilled construction workers don't earn $17 an hour because their unions encourage the unemployed to take up construction work, but because they restrict the supply of laborers. "Construction unions are petrified of increasing the supply of labor," notes Cornell industrial-relations professor (and public-works proponent) Vernon Briggs. Nothing scares them more than proposals—like the recent National Urban League call for a $100 billion jobs program centered on public works—that threaten to flood the market with workers who might be willing to do the job for less.

The threatened unions do not oppose public-works jobs projects outright. They just insist on a few restrictions. In the federal construction field, the most important restrictions are embodied in the notorious Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that all workers on federally funded construction projects be paid the "prevailing wage," which (once the fine print in the regulations is heeded) almost invariably means the union wage.

As a result, federal programs aimed at employing the chronically unemployed have simply tended to avoid building things. In delicate negotiations, the Carter administration did at one point manage to get the AFL-CIO's building-trades wing to agree to a relatively small ($1 billion, 50,000 jobs annually) program of public works to be built half by union workers at union scale and half by long-term unemployed, who would be paid at the lowest level of the Davis-Bacon wage scale. But the proposal never got off the ground, in part, according to one participant, because union support was never more than lukewarm. A larger program, which would try to bring millions of unemployed into hard-core construction work, was unthinkable.

Instead, Carter concentrated on expanding public-service employment under the CETA program. "Public service" means a job that

doesn't build anything (library aides, drug counselors, etc.). Here the threatened union was AFSCME, which supported CETA, but only after obtaining "equal pay" provisions that precluded undercutting state and local civil-service pay scales. But in several cities municipal wage scales were so high that even the lowest-level jobs paid more than the CETA program limit of $10,000. The unions responded by asking for higher CETA wages, arguing that, given the equal-pay requirement, this was the only way to enable disadvantaged workers to be hired in higher-salaried positions. AFSCME representatives "shrieked and yelled" if the administration suggested that another way to hire additional disadvantaged workers would be to allow them to be paid less than regular workers, according to an official who was in on the negotiations.

To get around the rigid union wage scales, the government increasingly pushed its job money out through private nonprofit organizations, which then hired the unemployed at subunion salaries. Even with this laundering process, CETA officials often had to negotiate job by job to make sure the subsidized workers were not performing any tasks that might be performed by regular, unionized employees—to make sure, in effect, that the CETA workers didn't do anything particularly useful. When the Department of Labor unthinkingly set up some workers in a factory making hardware for doors, there was "hell to pay," says Arnold Packer, a department official who worked on the jobs programs. The unions also backed provisions requiring that CETA undertake only short-term, and therefore relatively useless, projects.

Soon the public began to read of ghetto youths employed in video workshops and dance troupes, and justifiably wondered what it was getting for its money. There was little outcry when Ronald Reagan canceled that portion of CETA in 1981. The make-work nature of the program made it one of the most unpopular in the government. But the unions made it into make-work.

THE unpleasant truth is that any large government jobs program that seeks to put people to work at something useful will threaten some union or other. Repairing roads and bridges is especially useful work, which is precisely why taxpayers might be willing to pay for it. But because it is useful, it is work that is already being performed, to some extent, by organized workers. These workers could not hope to benefit by having the reserve army of the unemployed march into their profession. Even if wages were not undercut directly, they would tend to rise more slowly as union workers competed with laborers hungrier and poorer than themselves.

Given this conflict between the genuine self-interest of union members and the liberal ideal of the government as the employer of last resort, is it too much to suggest that the latter should prevail? The political and financial cost of a jobs program would be very large. But the potential payoff—in both economic and moral terms—is larger.

On the economic side, a public-works jobs program would boost national output by putting idle resources (the unemployed) to work. An unused coil of steel will at least be there next week. An unused work-hour is gone forever. Such a program would also provide directly something (jobs) that politicians must now seek to provide indirectly by pumping up the economy with fiscal and monetary stimulants. Forced economic expansion creates jobs, all right, but with disastrous consequences for inflation.

In place of the goal of generalized economic expansion, a jobs program would serve a related but more limited ideal: a society in which as many people as possible who are willing to work can work. This ideal is a traditional redistributionist goal of liberals, but it is one widely shared. To the extent that it is accepted as a primary economic purpose of government, the least inflationary way to accomplish it is probably to create jobs directly. A jobs program attacks unemployment without purposely overstimulating the whole economy. It increases demand for the commodity that is in excess supply—labor—without causing as much increase in the demand for what is not in excess supply. By holding down construction wages and taking advantage of cyclical overcapacity, a jobs program might even have some anti-inflationary effects.

The moral payoff comes when public-works jobs are seen as part of a larger effort to guarantee a job for every citizen—at least every citizen over a certain age. With 11 million now unemployed, this is no small chore. The WPA at its peak employed only about 3.3 million. But if the job could be accomplished, the government would be in a position to deal fairly unsentimentally with those who refused to avail themselves of the opportunity.

A guaranteed jobs program, Lester Thurow has noted, "would eliminate the endless sterile debate about what fraction of the unemployed are lazy and unwilling to work." Instead, they could be put to the test. Those who refused public-service jobs could be denied unemployment benefits. That fraction of current welfare recipients who might reasonably be expected to work could be required, not to undertake phony "job searches," but to show up for their guaranteed job or lose their benefits. Conservatives, above all, should appreciate a program that so rigorously enforced a stern work ethic, that replaced "income maintenance" with an opportunity for productive effort.

If this vision has a simple quality, that is not really because it is naïve in failing to recognize the complexities of today's economy. It is only naïve in a political sense: it fails to take into account the debilitating effects of our "new federalism," the unwillingness of liberals to turn against their traditional labor supporters, the blind opposition of conservatives to anything (except a military buildup) that increases government activity. But some simple ideas are right. ■

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THE FARMER ON THE DOLE

by Stephen Chapman

We're spending billions to "save" a way of life that isn't in danger, and wouldn't be worth saving if it were.

THE family farmer is a durable feature of American folklore. From its beginning America was regarded by Europeans as a pastoral Eden, shielded from the corrosive influences of city and commerce. American soil was cultivated, not by serfs and peasants as in the Old World, but by self-supporting landowners, thought to be the soul of a healthy democracy. In 1797 the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* stated that "in no part of the world are the people happier . . . or more independent than the farmers of New England." Thomas Jefferson frequently cited the blessings of America's agricultural character. "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue," he wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. "Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phaenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example."

This vision of a nation of small farmers has always been largely mythical. Jefferson urged his fellow Americans, "Let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a workbench, or twirling a distaff," lost in the "mobs of great cities." When he wrote those lines, one in three of his countrymen already lived away from the farm. Many of the rest were on slaveholding farms and plantations in the South, not exactly compatible with Jefferson's ideal.

Today, only 2.8 percent of the American population lives on farms, and fewer than half of these citizens depend on farming as their principal source of income. If independent family farmers are indeed the bedrock of the republic, that foundation has long since been eroded. But the idealization of the family farm persists, along with the impulse to preserve it at whatever cost. These sentiments know none of the usual ideological or partisan boundaries.

Democrat Jim Hightower, a self-styled populist currently running for Texas agriculture commissioner, quotes approvingly this characteristically apocalyptic complaint from the National Farmers Organization: "The farmhouse lights are going out all over America. And every time a light goes out, this country is losing something. It is losing the precious skills of a family farm system. And it is losing free men." Over on the other side of the political spectrum, conservative senator Robert Dole strikes a similar pose. "Family farms represent the very essence of what this country is about," he says. "They are the backbone of America." Like Hightower, Dole is worried about the decline of the family farm. "The farms are getting larger, the farmers are getting fewer, and the time has come for Congress to act," he argues.

Such emotionally charged pleas tend to strike a responsive chord in Congress, which, in fact, has been acting to protect the family farm for half a century. The array of programs ostensibly designed to preserve the nation's stock of sturdy yeomen has made agriculture the most heavily subsidized sector of our economy. The expense of these programs has grown even as the importance of farms in the economy has inexorably declined—from nearly a tenth of the nation's income in 1933, when most of the existing farm programs were initiated, to 2.6 percent in 1980. Last year the government spent over $11 billion on

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various forms of farm assistance—virtually all of them justified by pitchforkfuls of "save the family farm" rhetoric.

Even critics of the government's farm policies usually accept the goal of family-farm preservation, tending only to question whether the programs really help the beleaguered family farmer rather than his larger corporate competitors, or arguing simply that the expense has become excessive in a tight-budget era. These concerns are well founded, but they ignore the more basic question: why, exactly, does the tiny fraction of our population that chooses to practice family farming deserve all this solicitude in the first place?

So potent is the traditional image of the family farmer, and so unacquainted are most Americans with the real thing, that his actual characteristics are often ignored. For one thing, farm families are not worse off than their fellow citizens. Fifty years ago, the per capita income of farm dwellers was only 33 percent of the figure for nonfarmers; but since 1971 the recorded income of farm dwellers has amounted to 97 percent of that for nonfarmers, with the average farm family taking home $23,822 in 1980.

But the official figures undoubtedly underestimate the financial health of family farmers, given their ability, as self-employers, to underestimate their income when reporting it to the authorities (not to mention the favorable tax treatment those authorities accord what income farmers do report). Also, statistics on farm income typically include the nearly two million farmers—often retirees or disenchanted urbanites—who farm more as a hobby than anything else. The average income of commercial farmers (those who actually do it for a living) is an impressive $34,000. And the typical farmer (even counting the hobbyists) has even greater wealth than income, largely because he owns, on average, 400 acres of land. That and other assets bring his family's net worth to about $300,000, approximately twice the average for other American households.

In short, today's family farmer is typically not a desperate homesteader, but a sophisticated, relatively prosperous businessman. His success—which is simply the success of American agriculture—should not be resented, but it hardly makes him an obvious candidate for massive government assistance.

Why do we hear so much, then, about the family farmer's decline? The most striking illustration of his plight, supposedly, is the continuing decrease in the number of farms and farmers. At the turn of the century, thirty million Americans lived on 5.7 million farms. By 1979, only 6.2 million people lived on 2.3 million farms. Projecting this trend far enough, it is easy to predict that soon there will be no farmers and no farms. This makes as much sense as assuming that because American fertility rates have declined steadily since the nation was founded, eventually no one will reproduce at all.

The decline of the farming sector is both perfectly natural and wholly beneficial. It reflects two welcome phenomena: the increasing productivity of American farms and the rising living standards of all Americans. Seventy years ago, 106 man-hours of labor and seven acres of land were needed to produce 100 bushels of wheat; today it takes only nine man-hours and three acres. Technological improvements in machinery, fertilizer, pesticides, and seeds have made the difference. Hence fewer farmers cultivating roughly the same amount of land as in 1910 can feed a much larger number of people.

Then there is the effect of the growing affluence of the nation as a whole. In a modern economy, the demand for food grows only about as fast as the population—a reflection of the fact that nearly everyone is adequately fed. The demand for other goods and services grows much faster, meaning that more and more people have to work to provide everything from television sets to medical care, while fewer and fewer have to grow food. It says something about the usual picture of farmers being driven off the land by factors beyond their control that the migration accelerates during times of prosperity, not during slumps. (During the Great Depression, the direction of the migration was actually reversed.) A shrinking agricultural population, far from being a sign of decay, is almost invariably a by-product of material progress. The only economies in which farming is stable are the poorest and most primitive, where most people farm because otherwise they wouldn't eat.

By itself, then, the decline in the number of farms, or farmers, is no reason for worry. Some alarmists, however, blame it on the rise of big corporate farms—agribusiness, as the phenomenon is ominously labeled. True, farms have gotten bigger, as has nearly every other type of economic enterprise. They have done so in order to take advantage of the economies of scale offered by modern production techniques. Even so, the average farm has increased only 16 percent in size since 1969. There are still 2.4 million farms. In fact, only 8 percent of all U.S. farmland is farmed by corporations, and most of these are family corporations, set up mainly to avoid taxes. When you count only nonfamily corporations, the figure dips to one percent. So much for the fear that agriculture is being concentrated in a few corporate hands.

The number of federal programs directed at saving American farmers from extinction will come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the myth of the independent yeoman. Most farmers have their prices guaranteed by the federal price support program, which applies to wheat, corn, barley, oats, rye, sorghum, sugar, peanuts, soybeans, wool, rice, cotton, tobacco, and dairy products—just about everything, in fact. If the market price falls below the level set by the government, the Department of Agriculture in effect buys the farmer's crop. For

many crops, it also provides an additional subsidy—"deficiency payments," which pay the farmer the difference between the market (or support) price and a higher "target price." This year, the support price for wheat is $3.55 a bushel. The target price is $4.05 a bushel. If the market price were $3.30 a bushel, the farmer could sell his crop to the government for $3.55, and then collect an additional fifty cents for each bushel. Most price subsidy programs also require farmers to "set aside" (that is, not plant) part of their land, in an attempt to hold prices up by restricting production.

It is widely but mistakenly assumed that Washington has gotten tough with farmers since Ronald Reagan took office. Last year Congress *increased* the support price for nearly every farm commodity covered by USDA programs, and provided for additional increases in subsequent years. The wheat price rose from $3.20 to $3.55 a bushel, corn from $2.40 to $2.55, peanuts from $455 to $550 a ton. Congress also enacted a new system of price supports for sugar, supplementing the existing protectionist tariffs on sugar imports. Reagan did propose abolishing "deficiency payments," but these too were kept, and most of the "target prices" were raised. Even the price support program for tobacco—the least defensible subsidy of all—was left alone.

The 1982 budget, the vehicle for so many well-publicized Reaganesque spending cuts, actually raised the Agriculture Department's spending by 45 percent. Reagan's 1983 budget would reduce it by almost that much, but less because of newfound austerity than because his advisers expect higher market prices to reduce the direct cost of various commodity programs. That expectation will almost certainly be proved wrong. And Congress is likely to overrule the administration and provide extra dollars to farmers, who, like everyone else, are suffering the effects of the recession.

Aside from the basic programs designed to guarantee farmers comfortably high prices, the government performs dozens of smaller special favors. The USDA offers numerous loans to farmers—operating loans to buy seed, fertilizer, and machinery; real-estate loans to finance purchases of land; homeownership loans to help low- and moderate-income farmers buy houses; loans to help farmers recover from natural disasters, like droughts; loans to finance soil and water conservation projects; even loans to rural communities to pay for sewers. Most of these loans are made at subsidized interest rates. Farmers can also get direct payments (in addition to low-interest loans) to help them cope with disasters. They can buy crop insurance from the government, again at prices subsidized by the taxpayer. The Rural Electrification Administration, a relic of the Great Depression, still runs a $5 billion subsidized loan program. Farmers in most of the West get water from federal water projects at absurdly low rates. So the government spends billions making arid land fertile and then pays farmers to leave it idle.

Finally, the tax codes have often provided particularly rich soil for cultivating farmers. To avoid imposing administrative burdens on farmers, the tax law permits them to use the cash method of accounting. This allows the quick deduction of capital expenses, while much farm income—from the sale of cattle, for example—gets taxed as a long-term capital gain, at 40 percent of the normal rates. True, farmers once had to worry that the very land that made them wealthy might also subject them to high federal estate taxes when the property passed to the next generation—but their representatives in Washington have helped assuage these fears. Congress has decreed that the value of farmland, for estate tax purposes, may be computed according to a special "use value" formula, rather than by its ordinary market value. This formula cuts the value of a farm estate by more than half, on average. The law also lets farm heirs postpone payment of this reduced tax for up to five years, and then pay in ten installments, on which interest accrues at the luxurious rate of 4 percent.

The purpose of these provisions was to prevent family farmers from having to sell their land to pay taxes. But in 1980 Congress (spurred by farm-belt senators) repealed provisions in the income tax law that would have taxed farmers who *do* sell their inherited land on the full increase in its value since its purchase. (Now they need only pay taxes on any increase in value since the land was inherited.) Finally, in 1981—under pressure from farmers who persisted in complaining about their onerous tax burdens—Congress virtually eliminated the estate tax by creating a flat $600,000 exemption (effective in 1985).

This welter of subsidies and privileges constitutes not a safety net for farmers but a cocoon. Unfortunately, like recipients of most federal benefits (Social Security beneficiaries, veterans, students with guaranteed loans), farmers have come to regard them as something they're entitled to. When commodity prices fall below prosperous levels, farmers pour into Washing-

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ton to demand action; in 1979 one militant group, the American Agricultural Movement, set fire to a tractor in front of the Agriculture Department in protest. AAM also organized an unsuccessful "farm strike" in 1978 in an effort to extract higher prices for their crops. The reaction to the recession of 1981-82 has been equally predictable, as farm defenders in Congress have introduced a "farm crisis" bill that would increase crop subsidies still further, while restricting production in order to force prices up.

IRONICALLY, the most serious threat to the family farm may come from the measures designed to preserve it. For example, tax treatment of farms has become so favorable that high-bracket nonfarm taxpayers—doctors, dentists, lawyers, and the like—now purchase farmland as a tax shelter. Farmers who own their own acreage are tempted to sell it to such absentee landlords—hardly grounds for pitying the farmers who cash in, but still a threat to the owner-operated farm as an institution. Equally important, the absentee tax shelterers frequently bid up the price of land so high that aspiring young farmers are unable to acquire it.

The two principal farm programs —price supports and "deficiency payments"—also have perverse effects. Both these programs reward production: the more you produce, the more the government pays. Or, in other words, the bigger and wealthier the farmer, and the more distant from the traditional image of the family farmer, the more help he gets from the government. Thirty percent of all government payments go to the 11 percent of farmers with the largest farms, measured in annual sales. This is an especially well-off bunch, with an average household income of nearly $46,894 in 1980 (a bad year, by the way), more than double the median family income in the U.S.

The incentives built into these price support programs aggravate the very problem they are supposed to alleviate. Market prices are lower than farmers would like, mainly because of chronic overproduction. Low prices inform farmers that they are producing too much of a given commodity and encourage them to stop. The artificially high prices established by the Agriculture Department send exactly the opposite signal, stimulating farmers to do more of what got them into trouble in the first place. The government tries to address this contradiction by limiting the amount of land each farmer can plant with a particular crop. But land is only one factor in the production equation. Each individual farmer can circumvent the acreage restrictions by cultivating the remaining acres more intensively. So when the government reduces the allowable cultivated land by 20 percent, it can normally expect to reduce total output by only half that much. Of course, the techniques of intensive cultivation that this system rewards—primarily the use of more machinery, water, pesticides, and fertilizer—are the very techniques in which larger farms are likely to enjoy an advantage over smaller farms.

WHO PAYS to achieve these questionable goals? Price supports, the centerpiece of the farm programs, exact costs in two ways. Taxpayers have to bear the expense of whatever farm produce the Agriculture Department has to purchase when prices fall below the price support level. (In the last fiscal year, these purchases, along with "deficiency payments," cost more than $7 billion.) But that isn't the end of it. The whole point of the program is to "support" market prices—to keep them artificially high—so as to minimize or even eliminate direct government expenses. So consumers pay higher prices in the grocery store for everything from bread to milk to peanut butter. Unfortunately, not all consumers suffer equally. The higher prices act as a regressive tax—placing the heaviest burden on the poor and the lightest on the rich. This is because the lower your income, the greater the share of it you have to spend on necessities like food. It is not an exaggeration to say that, under the price support system, slum children in Harlem go without milk so that dairy farmers in Wisconsin may prosper.

Even if family farms were in danger of extinction, and even if federal farm programs served to preserve them, why should we? We don't try to preserve the family grocery store, the family pharmacy, or the family clothing store, and for good reason. In many industries and businesses, bigger has turned out to be better —better in the sense of providing more and better goods and services at a lower cost to consumers. In a relatively free market, large firms will drive out small ones only when their size allows greater efficiency. Such increases in efficiency are desirable because they raise living standards. If family farms were too inefficient to compete with huge corporate farms (which all evidence suggests they aren't), they would soon disappear in the absence of special aid. That might be unpleasant for family farmers. But it would increase the country's productivity, which tends to make everyone better off.

The usual rationale for aid to family farmers is that it preserves a cherished American tradition of self-sufficiency—a supposed contrast to the gray conformity of life in the corporate sector. But the farm programs preserve the tradition's form without its content. Whatever the hardship and rigors of rural life, farmers are no longer rugged individualists, responsible to no one but themselves. They have become welfare addicts, protected and assisted at every turn by a network of programs paid for by their fellow citizens. In exchange, most farmers allow Washington to dictate much of what they do. They have abandoned independence for security. Today's family farms are to Jefferson's vision what government consultants are to Horatio Alger. If Americans still believe in the virtue of hardy rural self-reliance, they should tell Washington to get out of the way and let farmers practice it. ■



KING OF THE CHEWS

by Elaine F. Weiss

Present at the creation of a forty-cent status symbol.

IT LOOKED like a *National Lampoon* parody, but it wasn't. The glossy, full-page color advertisement in the May 10, 1982, issue of *The New Yorker* pictured a diamond-and-emerald bracelet next to a trim silver package labeled "The Stimorol Experience." Below, a single line of white sans-serif type read, "At last, chewing gum for the rich."

"It's an outrageous ad," says Michael Stone, the man who brought Stimorol to America. "But it's a gutsy ad. No one falls asleep when they see it." And response to the ad campaign has been "beyond awesome, beyond our dreams, beyond comprehension." Stone estimates that the gum has been selling at about double (and in some stores, three to four times) the projected rate. In New York City, the first test market, Stimorol can be found—at forty cents for a pack of twelve pieces—not only at newsstands, pharmacies, and convenience stores but also at gourmet, cheese, and specialty shops. And negotiations are under way to sell the gum by the gift carton in Bloomingdale's.

Elaine F. Weiss is a journalist who has just finished a book on life in rural New England.

By the end of this year, Stone will have spent $6 million on his elaborate image campaign to make chewing gum an item of conspicuous consumption. And he's already planning to go national with Stimorol early next year, much sooner than he had expected. "Our national timetable was smashed to smithereens," he claims, "by the wave of demand" after the ad appeared in *The New Yorker* (at a cost of about $18,000) and in *The New York Times Magazine* and regional editions of *People* and *Sports Illustrated*. Readers of those magazines began tearing out the ad and bringing it to their local candy stores, asking for the gum. A man phoned Stone from a booth at Thirty-fourth Street and Broadway, complaining he couldn't find Stimorol downtown. A woman in Nebraska sent Stone a fifty-dollar check for as much gum as it would buy. A small candy store on Main Street in Amherst, Massachusetts, requested a shipment to cater to the local college population. Individual shopowners have been asking to sell Stimorol, even though it is not yet distributed in their region, and a vigorous mail-order trade has blossomed in Stone's office, bypassing the wholesalers. The Scandinavian Shop, a concession at the Knoxville World's Fair, has been selling a thousand packs of Stimorol a day. And Stone suspects there is a thriving black-market trade, with prices as high as sixty cents a pack.

But in a recession, that's a bargain rate for a status symbol. "We've tapped something basic in the American psyche," says Stone with a pleasant smile. "Now you don't have to shell out $40,000 for a Mercedes to prove you're successful; you no longer have to shell out forty dollars for designer jeans, or even seventy-nine cents for Perrier water. Now you can buy Stimorol gum and get your status for only forty cents." Stone understands what many critics in the media still don't realize—that Stimorol *isn't* "chewing gum for the rich." It's for the insecure.

"I'd have trouble paying the rent on this office if I intended to sell

Sarah Drews

only to the rich," says Stone in Stimorol's American headquarters, decorated in beige, black, and chrome, and located in a swank building in the New York suburb of White Plains. "As Americans, as the children of immigrants, the closest we have to a cultural heritage is our desire for success, for self-achievement," he claims. "Moving up a notch on that ladder is our heritage. We can measure our success by our material possessions, and those possessions become public demonstrations of our achievements. We make statements about ourselves by what we buy—designer labels, status objects. If we hesitate about paying extra for these things, if we think we can't afford them, that says something is wrong, that says we haven't made it. That's the essence of America." Adds Paul Gumbinner, of Anesh, Viseltear, Gumbinner, the agency that developed the Stimorol campaign, "If you tell people they're supposed to like it, that people with cultivated palates do, then they're more likely to respond favorably. As with caviar, it becomes a social expectation to like it."

STONE and Gumbinner's role in creating such an expectation is apparent when you strip the silver wrapper and snob appeal off the gum. Stimorol is nothing new; it has been around for twenty-five years and is chewed all over the world. It is the leading gum in Scandinavia, Belgium, and Holland, and is extremely popular in other Continental countries, as well as in Great Britain, Australia, and parts of Africa. American tourists have been known to carry home cases of it.

Stimorol is manufactured by the Dandy Chewing Gum Company of Vejle, Denmark, a family business started three generations ago and supposedly named by one of the founders after a visit to the United States, where he took a fancy to the song "The Yankee Doodle Boy." Dandy is now the fourth largest gum manufacturer in the world after the three American giants—Wrigley's, American Chicle (a division of Warner-Lambert), and Beechnut (a division of Life Savers, which is part of Nabisco Brands). Dandy produces a full line of candies and gums, but Stimorol is its pride, and for years the company had been hoping to bring it to the lucrative American gum market, where annual sales reach $1.5 billion, advertising budgets top $100 million, and per capita consumption is three times that of Europe. But "there's a graveyard, somewhere in New Jersey," says Stone, "filled with European companies that tried to sell in America and died."

Stone got to know Dandy while he was manager of a European bubble-gum subsidiary of W. R. Grace. Having trained in the marketing departments of Procter & Gamble and General Foods, Stone, now forty-two years old, convinced Dandy of the need for careful planning and research, when he sought to become the company's sole American marketing agent in 1980. "Let the American consumers tell us how to market Stimorol," he told Dandy's board of directors. "Whatever about the gum they tell us to change, we will. Only the name and taste are sacred; all other properties are expendable."

The name had been coined a quarter-century ago by combining the Latinate root of what is in English the verb "stimulate" (for the supposed effect of the gum on the taste buds) and the suffix "-ol," common to Scandinavian brand names.

As for the flavor, "Stimorol tastes only like Stimorol," according to Stone. It is strong and vaguely medicinal, mingling mint, eucalyptus, and anise, a taste many people liken to Vick's cough drops. "In the first five or six seconds of chewing," Stone explains, "the taste is so shocking that your brain tells you you're being poisoned. But once you work your way through your first pack, you'll love it."

After considerable debate, the directors of Dandy gave Stone permission to proceed with market-preference tests. During the next two years, "we tore apart the rest of the product," says Stone. Stimorol is a tablet with a candy coating, much like a Chiclet, and its color had always been light blue. But Stimorol in America is pristine white. Consumers tested here were given tablets in an assortment of colors—blue, green, and white. All had the same Stimorol flavor, but most of the people tested claimed the blue and green tablets did not taste as good as the white ones. So now the Dandy plant on the Jutland peninsula mixes special batches for the American market.

The first sets of tests were conducted on the East Coast with an "in-depth focus group" of several hundred adults aged between eighteen and fifty-four. The researchers examined every nuance of what the group thought and *felt* about the gum.

Their first discovery was that no one could actually describe the strange taste of Stimorol. This suggested the strategy of marketing the gum as something to be "experienced," and the slogan "The Stimorol Experience." The focus group did provide enough information, however, for the researchers to form four basic "concepts" about Stimorol: 1) it was a "very adult" gum; 2) it could "blast away boredom"; 3) it served as a "mouth reviver"; 4) it instilled "instant breath confidence."



Based on these concepts, Stone had Anesh, Viseltear, Gumbinner

devise six different package designs. In the rest of the world, Stimorol can be found in an unassuming red and white package with horizontal blue stripes. For the first tests in America, the gum appeared in a somber dark blue wrapper with thin white stripes, like an old-school tie (for the "very adult"), in a package illustrated with an explosion of yellow stars (to "blast away boredom"), with a bright green, Listerine-like label (for "mouth revival"), and with a picture of male and female silhouettes almost kissing, with red circles radiating from their mouths (for "breath confidence").

In the next round of tests, among thousands more people nationwide, the "very adult" and "breath confidence" concepts fared best. Not surprising, since about three quarters of all adults who chew gum say they do so to freshen their breath. (Other adult motivations include easing tension, resisting smoking or eating, calming an upset stomach, or unplugging ears at high altitudes.) But while the package with the almost-kissing couple performed well in the preference tests, the "very adult" blue wrapper failed miserably.

But a shiny silver package had also been tested, and it became the most popular wrapper of all. "As initially conceived, the silver color had no real monetary meaning," says Gumbinner. "It was just to be different, brighter than other gum wrappers." Indeed, there was originally no reason to think of the gum as being intended for any particular income group; the demographic surveys the agency conducted showed that Stimorol's appeal cut across socioeconomic lines.

USING these findings and beliefs, Stone and Gumbinner explored dozens of possible advertising ideas, slogans, and jingles. They dismissed the conventional claims of a new taste sensation, lasting flavor, or a longer, softer chew; even though these were all true of Stimorol, they were boring. Eventually Stone and Gumbinner settled on three slogans.

The first was "Very Danish, very expensive." "Things imported from Denmark are expected to be expensive," says Gumbinner, citing Danish modern furniture, Dansk porcelain, and Georg Jensen crystal. "If this gum was imported from Greece, things wouldn't be the same." In line with this image of an expensive import, Stone raised the suggested retail price from the standard twenty-five cents to forty cents. "We are trying to exploit the imported-product syndrome in America," he says candidly. "It is well known that Americans are willing to pay more for something imported. Even if there is no difference, it makes them feel good."

But the home office in Denmark "had a hard time understanding the phenomenon," says Stone, "because in Europe things are imported just for survival, bringing in the necessities they don't have. But in this country imports are a luxury item." Stone knew that only seeing would be believing, so he brought some Dandy executives to New York, waltzed them through Bloomingdale's gourmet department and Zabar's fancy food store, and calmly waited for their blue eyes to pop out of their heads while watching affluent shoppers blithely pick up anything marked "imported" and not even check the price sticker before paying an exorbitant amount for it. The Danes were convinced.

So the word "Danish" appears at least once on every side of the Stimorol package: "Danish Chewing Gum." "Made in Denmark." "The Danish Breath Experience." Also prominently displayed is a small royal crown and the phrase "His Majesty King Frederik IX's Award for Excellence in Export." "That's an important part of the cachet we've built around the gum," says Stone. King Frederik has been dead for ten years, but he did confer export awards on three or four Danish companies every year in recognition of their "promoting Danish products overseas in a proper way," according to the trade attaché at the Danish consulate in New York.

The second slogan that Stone and Gumbinner came up with was "The taste is even more beautiful than the package," in honor of the silver wrapper, now festooned with a circle of green, red, and blue stripes around the Stimorol logo. And the third was the one that has earned Stimorol a place in the annals of Madison Avenue: "At last, chewing gum for the rich." The brainstorm that produced it struck so quickly that no one remembers exactly how it happened. Stone and Gumbinner do recall that when the time came to submit the ad to *The New Yorker*, they feared the magazine would reject it—not because of the slogan, but because of the product itself. Would the advertising acceptance committee approve an ad for a product as plebeian as chewing gum?

Not only did they approve the ad, the executives "went nuts about it," according to Stone. They invited him to lunch and presented him with a handsomely framed reproduction of the page, matted alongside the pastel cover of the issue and inscribed "The New Yorker welcomes Stimorol, May 10, 1982." Later, they interviewed Stone for a radio promotion spot about how it pays to advertise in *The New Yorker*. Stimorol is now endorsing *The New Yorker*.

The magazine's ad department has reported some negative comments from readers, but most of the response to the campaign has been favorable. "We've somehow endeared ourselves," Stone says. "Whether people admire the absolute boldness of the approach or think it symbolizes the essence of American entrepreneurship, I don't know. But they've put their arms around us."

By the end of the year, Stone will have spent all of the $6 million budgeted for advertising and promotion. The diamond bracelet and silver package have already cropped up in four-by-five-foot posters in a hundred select New York City subway stations, mostly on the Upper East Side and in the Wall Street area. And two different TV spots have been aired in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut metropolitan region.

In the first, a camera pans across a bureau littered with the personal belongings of a well-heeled couple who have apparently retired for the night: keys to a sports car, an elegant man's watch, gold cuff links and earrings, a wallet stuffed with credit cards, a wad of bills in a gold money clip, and a gleaming silver package of Stimorol, with two of its white tablets nestled among a string of pearls. As violins play in the background, the camera settles on the gum, and a sultry female voice whispers, "At last, chewing gum for the rich. Stimorol." From the sound of her voice, the wait has been almost unbearable.

In the second TV ad, a package of Stimorol is shrouded in darkness. It slowly turns toward the camera and emerges into the light with a crescendo of trumpets and timpani, imitating the opening of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" (known as "*2001* music" on Madison Avenue). A virile baritone with a seductive European accent (who Stone swears is the only Danish voice-over announcer in New York) says, "Stimorol. Chewing gum . . . from Denmark . . . The taste is even more beautiful than the package."

Of course, advertising can carry a product only so far. Stimorol has already met some resistance from an unexpected source—Zabar's, the gourmet delicatessen on Manhattan's Upper West Side. After stocking Stimorol for a few weeks, Zabar's suddenly discontinued it. Was it because the store found the ad campaign offensive? "No, we found the gum's taste offensive," says a Zabar's manager, "and we don't sell what we don't like." Even Stone realizes that the initial sales figures have to be high, since the gum is bound to lose a fair percentage of customers, like Zabar's, who just don't like its taste.

For the moment, however, Stone isn't worrying. In fact, he plans to use the original "chewing gum for the rich" ad all over the nation. "To tell the truth," he says with a smile, "the Dandy management in Denmark doesn't understand what the hell I'm doing—but they see it's working." ■



WE BURN quite a few ricks at Jack Daniel's. That's because it takes a lot of charcoal the way we smooth out our whiskey.

The oldtime way we mellow our whiskey calls for seeping every drop through charcoal vats that stand as tall as a good-sized room. Just to fill one vat takes the charcoal from three ricks of hard maple burned in the open air. That's why our rickyard gets pretty full. And why it'll never get empty. After a sip of Jack Daniel's, we believe, you'll be glad of that.



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Revenge

BY ALEXANDER THEROUX



I REMEMBER—forgive the paradox—an unmemorable girlfriend of mine who in leaving me for someone else left me as well with a previously unfelt and inadmissible emotion, it being for a moment impossible to face the truth, never mind tell it; but as surprise ebbed another urge flowed. My immediate thought was a simple and uncomplicated one: I wanted to kill her.

Revenge, exactly what I felt, is forgiveness's other face. It is an emotion, discounting mercy, neat to the taste and born of a desperate need to rectify a wrong by inflicting harm in return for an injury, a slight, or an insult and to exact satisfaction for that which, at least in the sufferer's eye, blind and stupid fate (never, of course, without its specific agent) not only has allowed but in a way has cruelly fostered. The sole desire in retribution is to equalize: "I'll get even with you!" To revenge is, in fact, to avenge. Simply put, it seeks—it demands—justice.

A popular legend has it that the Italian composer Antonio Salieri, overshadowed by his rival Mozart's glory but, worse, nursing a deep wound at the cosmic inequality of things-as-distributed, at the first-night performance of *Don Giovanni*, alone of all the others, hissed and stormed out of the theater—and then when opportunity arose poisoned his enemy. Caesar was stabbed by senators, Socrates was murdered by judges, and Christ was slapped by lackeys. So envy is always involved in revenge, but that is only the beginning, for the overwhelming and monomaniacal conviction superseding it is the thought on the revenger's part that without his personal intervention, correcting happenstance, the galling want of fairness will forever prevail and the suddenly—and often reasonlessly—despised will go scot-free. It will be remembered that while Salieri toiled desperately over his own mediocre compositions, feeling ever unrewarded, Mozart's work reputedly came easy and fame followed. Salieri couldn't abide this. In *Mozart and Salieri* (1830), Pushkin gives us his complaint:

Alexander Theroux's most recent novel, Darconville's Cat, *was published by Doubleday last year.*

Where, where is justice, when the sacred gift,
When deathless genius comes not to reward
Perfervid love and utter self-denial,
And toils and strivings and beseeching prayers,
But puts her halo round a lack-wit's skull,
A frivolous idler's brow? . . . O Mozart, Mozart!

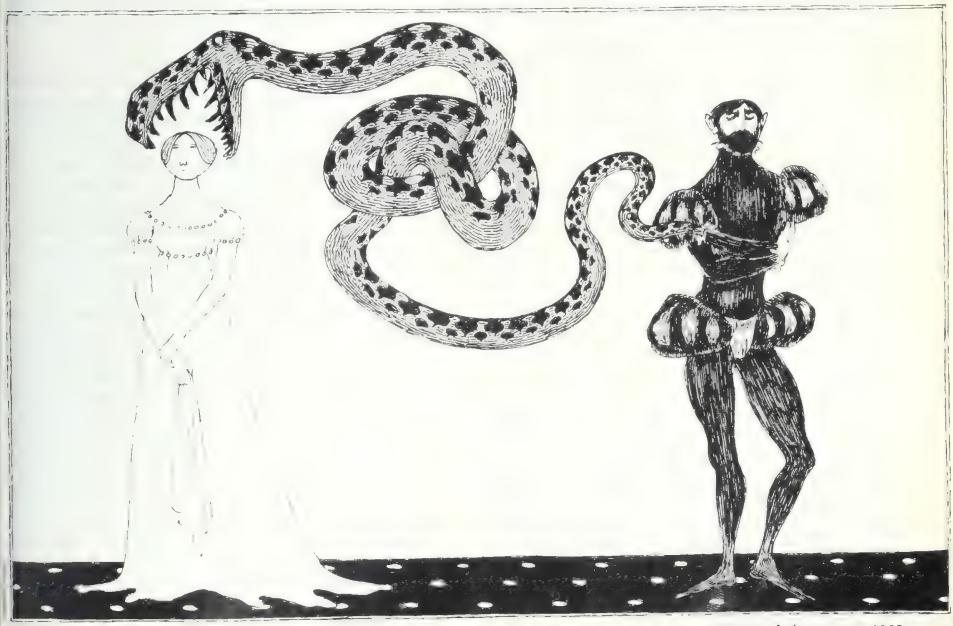
Revenge transfigures you. It boils and concocts into poisonous nourishment all the facts and fictions it compounds from the lives of its enemies, and fuels the delight it abhors, for your grief has found the one thing in this life that *causes* it. Alive, it is your plague, instigates against you, throttles all you are. The vigorous if irrational idea is that you alone of all others on earth are left to correct what otherwise must go forever uncorrected. And in spite of the fact that in the process you become a cauldron of pure pain—owned, in fact, by that which you would sell, and are diminished by ("The murderer," writes Nabokov, "is always the victim's inferior") —there is often a crazy comfort in the obsession with whatever must be vindicated by whomever must be abused or punished or killed.

Revenge, like hemorrhoids, seems to have been created to locate in one particular place one particular pain to absolve the body in all other places of all other pains.

Do we fear the Gorgon or simply create it to locate our fears? The retributive aspect of revenge, in any case, whether logical or not—to put things right—is nevertheless its primal scream, what indeed gives it its most commonly applied epithet: "sweet."



REVENGE! Where hasn't this shadow reached? It is a poem by Tennyson, the name of Sir Richard Grenville's famous ship, and a tragedy by Edward Young. There is an Iranian drink so named. Fairy tales virtually have no other plot. It is as old as the first murder ("And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell") and as recent as the summer of 1982, when the Israelis invaded Lebanon and announced that this was in retaliation for the shooting of a diplomat in London. It is the central theme of Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy, animates every discussion of capital punishment, and is even implied in the Virginia state motto: *Sic semper tyrannis*—Booth, avenging the lost Civil War, shot Lincoln howling those very words. I'd suggest that along with love and war, with which themes, let us say, it has more than passing acquaintance, revenge is the single most informing element of great world literature. And George Orwell, in his essay "Why I Write" (1947), cites it as the first motive for many taking up the profession ("the desire . . . to get your own back on grownups who snubbed you in childhood, etc."). The revengeful personality—it is more often than not an intellectual's, of which Hamlet,



Edward Gorey

a thinker, not a "rash and splenetic" type, is only one example—very often has the power, in fact, to give a significant penetrating quality to literary expression; one thinks of Juvenal on Roman decadence, Luther on papistical excesses, Milton on Charles I, and Hitler on the Treaty of Versailles. But for the pure, unadulterated masterpiece of contumely very little surpasses Alexander Pope's almost gibbering attack, in his "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" (1735), on the effeminate Lord Hervey ("Sporus"), who had been collaborating with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu on scurrilities against him and so met with this response:

> *Let Sporus tremble—"What? that Thing of silk,*
> *Sporus, that mere white Curd of Ass's milk?*
> *Satire or sense alas! Can Sporus feel?*
> *Who breaks a Butterfly upon a Wheel?"*
> *Yet let me flap this Bug with gilded wings,*
> *This painted Child of Dirt that stinks and stings . . .*
> *Whether in florid Impotence he speaks*
> *And, as the Prompter breathes, the Puppet squeaks;*
> *Or at the Ear of Eve, familiar Toad,*
> *Half Froth, half Venom, spits himself abroad . . .*

While black, there is something splendid, almost mythological, in such ramping revenge, the wicked ebullience, the *folie de grandeur* mounted to frame a prose so determined to collaborate with anger, disappointment, and fury. The beating heart of revenge is its excessiveness, and its excesses—the pathological lengths to which it will go—are astonishing. The misandrous Delia Bacon, part critic, part crank, spent her entire life trying to besmirch William Shakespeare. Rufus W. Griswold, who secretly hated Poe but was made his literary executor by wheedling it out of Mrs. Clemm, maliciously proceeded upon Poe's death to blacken his reputation through hundreds of lies and falsifications. Revenge is a feral branch of hatred. The anticlerical historian of philosophy Will Durant (educated by the Jesuits) dismisses all of medieval philosophy in one sentence: "A baffling circuit from faith to reason and back to faith again."

There is something intriguing here worth another word. Another sort of pathos seems involved. There is a certain hopeless kind of revenge, never far from insanity, that insists on mounting itself against the abstract, the too vast, the uncircumscribable, a few examples of which might be Nietzsche's opposition to Christianity, Frederick Rolfe's position against the Anglicans, Hitler's vindictiveness toward the Jews. Otto Weininger, riding his hobbyhorse, wrote the dense neo-Kantian *Sex and Character* to prove women had no souls! Such mountainous fury can only consume, wear away, and rot the antagonist, but it is a type of intransigence, even if in a negative way, that in its uncompromising madness approaches genius. The person given over to revenge is never an ordinary man. The New York Yankees played so poorly in a doubleheader against Chicago on the night of August 3, 1982, dropping both games, that owner George Steinbrenner, rancid with fury, publicly declared as a humiliation to his team—"they weren't worth even watching"—that all 34,000 fans attending that night could attend another game free.

It is the lot of such people, if to be opposed, then also to be invigorated by opposition, beholding their enemies in an eternal vigil, like the lifeless cobra in whose eye the murderer's image is forever embedded, and they actually crave to hate that constant hallucination of face—whether smirking through the attack it signals or the absolution it seeks—which becomes, in fact, almost a badge of those enemies for one attributes to them not that state of normal human happiness, shot through with the common moods of mankind, that should move us to entertain for them a feeling of kindly sympathy, but a species of arrogant delight that merely pours oil on the furnace of our rage. One thinks of Richard Nixon and the press, imagined leaks, the enemies list.



In its usual form, revenge is the change in behavior that is classic reaction—a response to a stimulus. For instance, Mr. Ahmed Tariki, the radical Saudi Arabian founder of OPEC (currently living in exile), organized the oil-exporting states specifically to strike a blow at the United States, where, because of the treatment he received during six years' engineering study in Texas in the late 1950s—the "Jim Crow" years, when he was considered black and treated vilely—he became embittered for life. The not-to-be-disowned John Hinckley was shown in his trial for shooting President Reagan to be nursing a deep grudge against authority figures (his wealthy father, advised by a psychiatrist, had sent him packing with only $100), who in his confused mind seemed fully unimpressed with his young, impossibly high, certainly megalomaniacal ambitions to be a successful rock star and boyfriend of a famous movie star. And then Peter Sutcliffe, the "Yorkshire Ripper," was a pathetic and cowardly little boy who, bullied at school, grew to take up body-building and was soon snarling at the weak himself. He adored his mother, who, however, had an affair that desolated him, and within months of his marriage (he both hated and feared his wife Sonia) he began attacking and killing women—prostitutes—who, queerly, were an essential part of both his despair and his marriage. There is something in the dark soul of the mass murderer—J. B. Tropp mann, who did away with a woman and her five children, Henri Desiré Landru, the French Bluebeard, and Theodore Bundy come immediately to mind—that is never far from revenge, its weird little posture giving destruction added motive in early failure, grievous disappointment, remembered scorn



The revenger is, by definition, a victim. He is solitary, often in exile, forgoing communion with the society he terrifies. "What dog," asks George Eliot in *Silas Marner*, "likes a figure bent under a heavy bag?" The world has done badly by him. A formula of rupture has taken place; suddenly his consciousness is heightened, for he has spied (a word he'd favor) what he immediately can neither countenance nor forgive, and he fixes upon that one thing that the reductionist mind madly isolates as the only solution to the world's woes. Every former excellence of his enemy becomes every conceivable fault, every promise—expected, if not actually made—an impervestigable lie, and every memory a viper eating through the bowels of his benefits, all to set in motion such a fell and deadly hate that through a sea of sins he'd wade to his revenge. Human feeling curdles. Lenin, visiting Maxim Gorky, once demanded that he shut off a phonograph playing Beethoven's "Appassionata" lest it weaken his anticzarist resolve with feelings of sentiment. Oliver Cromwell sent his soldiers back to Drogheda to slaughter the Irish children they thought to spare, with the remark "Nits will be lice." There are many passions that we are condemned to feel only in a reduced form: never revenge. With it you have come under the shadow. You would countenance black magic. And yet how little is achieved, though other problems be solved! How *mistakenly* can a person have wanted what, taken away, repudiates the meaning of life itself?

REVENGE is a restless desire precisely for the *ideal*. The tormented soul, hobbled by denial, by prohibition, sees himself betrayed and so, paradoxically, tries to recover by an act of supreme alienation and anger that which has been taken from him and which, constantly fleering at and ridiculing him by the very nature of its existence, mocks the mind to murder. "I want satisfaction!" cried the duelist in his humiliation. And yet what most generates, most often animates, revenge? Disappointed love, perfidy, dissolved friendship. And why so? The revenger is a person, usually, who has expected eternal unflinching fidelity from family and from friendship, and often in a quite ungainsayable way, but having lost it —he literally suffers a reverse—then employs the most effective and rigorous means of correction and so goes through life fixed on delirious hope in order to pledge allegiance to an inverted form of the same ideal. "Oh," cries Ahab, "now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief."

The smoldering aspect of revenge is often in direct proportion to the degree in which the person's right to exist as a human being has been taken away. In his illness—he is literally infected—he has been handed, so to speak, a writ of non exeat. He must be cured. The cure is freedom. Whoever will set the revenger free—and the cry for release is the sine qua non of his gnawing vindictiveness—can be the

only one, in fact, able to do so, and so ironically remains, as the singular agent of deliverance, also the sole abettor of his own destruction. It is a marriage, pledged until death do them part. A man in the grip of revenge has not so much lost the ideal as he has transferred the whole concept of one ideal to the furthest extreme of another, and challenging in the process the necessity of injustice that exists—often as the emanation of a punitive or arbitrary God—he writes in his own bitter soul not just a complaint but an entire destructive theology.

Revenge, indeed, has curiously theological implications. The law of talion—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth—cries out to its cognate, "Retaliate!" Blood revenge is actually sanctioned in the Old Testament, the returning of evil for evil, blood for blood, a "justifying"—in the printer's phrase—of an unbalanced line. In Melville's *Moby-Dick*, the rankling Captain Ahab, named after the Old Testament ruler who "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him," becomes the embodiment of revenge itself. He has been wounded ("unmanned") by the whale, inexplicably, and the dismemberment has driven him to such a pitch of anguish—homicidal, suicidal, and deicidal, all at once—that in maniacal pursuit of his nemesis ("the incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them . . .") he has to be confined at times to a straitjacket in which, mad, he "swung to the rockings of the gales."

Ahab's intellect is enslaved but yet also concentrated by his madness, and, as happens in the matter of revenge, he has lost his humanity in the very act of vindicating it—the essential paradox of revenge—and has become the very image of the thing he hates, a statue of penalty cast in a single mold, a fireman of punishment and egotism. "I'd strike the sun if it insulted me!" he shrieks. Every dilemma has two horns. For Ahab has made himself not just a proud, self-appointed judge like Prometheus, Faust, Manfred, and Lucifer but also, like them, revenge's plaintiff, a tragic scapegoat. He is both victim and executioner—revenge always involves both—who in his compulsion for seeking equality has also elected to accept vengeance as the sole law of existence (the opposite was his intention), and so transmogrifies virtue into vice.

The greater the punishment each revenger feels merited by his action, the greater the value the agent of revenge attributes to the burden of his having to do so. Each constructs his revenge more or less according to the only logic available to him in a world that, however, illogically presents itself, for since he is forced to accept the fact that a positive, lost, is evil, the alternative of a negative, found, must perforce be the only good at hand to address it—and so the breach actually becomes the observance in a desperate attempt to settle a matter of contradiction by means of conflicting evidence. There is no better poacher than an ex-gamekeeper. We have here inversion, a topsyturvification of moral values that in revenge becomes its canon law. The condition is found in, among others, the autobiographer as avenger, the rejected lover, the disaffiliated child who grows up to settle the score.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which takes its cue from Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), the father of all revenge plays, simply cannot be understood except in its theological context. It is, characteristically, not just the case of an eye for an eye, for the jaw must be taken, along with the tongue and ears—*and* the victim must, after exquisite torments of both body and mind, go straight to hell. Revenge, to the Elizabethans and Jacobeans, demanded hellfire and everlasting torment.



EXCESS IS ALL. Extremism in the pursuit of justice—the revenger's conundrum—is no vice. And it's to be taken as a matter of breviary, this supernatural backdrop before which revenge is enacted—heaven, hell, and purgatory—that only with so much at stake can this terrible emotion be comprehended or, in fact, taken to have in it something akin to the slow grinding of the mills of divine vengeance—slow, yes, for often extreme patience is required.

Revenge is not always blister upon heat. It loiters, it bides its time, it grows. It perhaps alone gives full *meaning* to the full measure of the injury suffered. Months, years, decades may wear away, but not the corrosive and intolerable recollection of an injustice burning a hole in your sleep, if ever sleep there is. The nightmare that prevents, however, eventually *corrects* sleep. The wheel of fortune turns. It is the gift opportunity hands to adversity, a reward crowning pursuit and throwing up the exact set of circumstances that only time can give when, for the victim, it is most inopportune—he has moved away, say, remarried, grown older, changed his name, and, perhaps best of all, *forgotten*—but when, for the executioner, irony is made iron in the delirious turnabout that literally defines serendipity and without which, it may be argued, revenge can never be sufficiently *raffiné*. The revenger is a sinner with patience, a saint without forbearance, a master of what Borges calls the art of the *cachada* (to grab, to take somebody unawares). Delay is in fact only a kind of subtlety. The infernal deity Nemesis, goddess of vengeance—her statue in Rome was in the Capitol—is the daughter of Nox, and under the carapace of night one waits, waits, until all is ready. Revenge a hundred years old still has milk teeth.

Edmond Dantès, left to rot for fourteen years as a prisoner in the gloomy Château d'If in Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, finally escapes ("Enough of this prison, let me now seek the antidote . . .")

nasterfully—and premeditatively—to wreak ven-eance on each of his persecutors. "They'll remem-er my carbuncles," said Karl Marx from obscurity, vriting *Das Kapital* in ill health, poverty, and the xile forced on him, as on others, by a corrupt eco-nomic system.

This is what's called "revenge in lavender"—re-enge reserved—hanging fire, truly, as the years lope ver the hill. But the cancer has metastasized. And hat's just when the fun begins. "I'm back!" cries he revenger, demanding remembrance. "Look at ne! Pay attention!" I read in the papers a few years go of a man whose son had been hazed to death turing an initiation by several fraternity boys, and he aggrieved father chose to take his revenge only fter ten long years had passed when, *pro re nata*, ie methodically hunted down each of their sons and illed them in kind. "Thus," says Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*, "the whirligig of time brings in his evenges." Revenge, as the proverb says, is a dish best served up cold.

There is, finally—and importantly—a penalty in evenge that can never be disregarded, the calm villingness to slay the self in the attempt to free it by those who, in daring personally to mete out jus-ice, even if as only they see it, must also take the nedicine they dispense. There was, for example, an prising in the Sixties on Pulau Senang Prison Is-and, off the coast of Singapore. The prisoners could have fled. But they lingered to mutilate their guards —they castrated them, put out their eyes, etc.—and because the revenge was such time-consuming cru-elty they were quickly caught and hanged, sixty-six of them, six at a time, on the Singapore gallows.

It is a sensibility, the revenger's, that, if open to the asperity of insult and keen to redress it, is also one equally arranged to feel all the while the criminal denial of true justice his very act contra-venes. The tragedy is that he can't do otherwise. Forgiveness to him is the absence of justice, and so he "commits" justice, so to speak, in order to abolish crime—even as he perpetuates it. The crime is the punishment. It's as if he reasons: I am pleased with defeat in what I do because secretly for what I do I know I am guilty and only punishment can redeem me. Revenge has something about it oddly propiti-ative, an act often spitefully but inexorably united to contrition. Let heaven exist, he seems to say, even though my dwelling place is hell.



OF PENALTIES there are many. There's often an unconscious wish for revenge in alcoholism, an indirect aggression born of anger and resentment against either oneself or others, and the same might be said of impotence and frigidity—a disposition, often, involving a subconscious impulse to thwart—and I have no doubt that this might also apply to failure in school or gluttony or bedwetting.

There's suicide. The Chinese and Chuvashes often hanged themselves on the doors of their enemies. In Hugo's *Les Misérables*, the crafty, inexorable, and ubiquitous Inspector Javert dogs Jean Valjean for forty years (for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children) and then, robbed of his chance for retribution, commits suicide. His absolute fixation on revenge—*and in the name of law*—alone has given meaning to his sterile life. He has known only one emotion. Crazed with that detail, he cannot understand the whole. Or can he? Perversely, dreadfully, he comes to win *admiration* for the thief he's so long hated and pursued—a galley slave, a convict, who illogically, cruelly, returns pardon for hatred, good for evil! His nemesis in his forgiveness becomes his benefactor. An entire order of unexpected facts, fragmenting all certainty, arises to subjugate him, a moral sun rising only to blind him like an owl. All the axioms that had been the supports of his existence suddenly crumble:

> *He saw before him two roads, both equally straight; but he saw two; and that terrified him—him who had never in his life known but one straight line. And, bitter anguish, these two roads were contradictory. One of these two straight lines excluded the other. Which of the two was the true one? His condition was inexpressible . . . what should he do? Give up Jean Valjean, that was wrong; leave Jean Valjean, that was wrong . . . what then! Such enormities should happen and nobody should be punished?*

But someone must be punished. That is just the *point* of revenge, that which for so long has given to it the battle cry "Somebody's going to pay for this!"

But who? Compelled to recognize all of a sudden the existence of forgiveness, Javert can only conclude—a horror to himself almost as if he had lost his faith (which, in fact, he has)—that *he* has become depraved, and so what should he then do? Call for Pontius Pilate's basin and wash his claws? That is ontologically impossible for him, precisely what the revengeful man is unable to do, for, as we've seen, this emotion—"so durable and obstinate," according to La Bruyère, "that reconciliation on a sickbed is the greatest sign of death"—is fed by the law of balance, equality, and a mania for justice that, even if it turns on itself, must be satisfied. And so, like the pygmy rattlesnake that bites and poisons itself in the convulsions of its fury, the empty Javert—"getting even"—revenges himself on himself and plunges headlong in suicidal despair from a parapet into the murky Seine. This is not victory, but if it is not victory it is yet revenge, and that is perhaps its most terrifying side, that, meeting nothing else, it becomes an end in itself. Who fights with monsters may thereby become one. Let Ahab beware Ahab. It is always ourselves we must fear first. ■

TOOLS FOR LIVING™

Convert-A-Bulb



How would you like to save more than $15 per fixture when you next change a 3-way lightbulb? Three-way bulbs have some major shortcomings. They are noticeably more expensive than regular bulbs, they come in a limited range of sizes and styles, and the high setting on a 3-way bulb gives you significantly less light than you are entitled to expect. A plain 100-watt bulb gives 1740 lumens of light; a 30-70-100 watt 3-way at the highest setting gives only 1285 lumens.

The Convert-A-Bulb screws into your 3-way fixture and enables you to have 3-way action from a regular lightbulb. It accepts any standard base bulb from 7½ to 150 watts. Let's assume that you replace a 50-100-150 watt 3-way bulb with a regular 150-watt bulb. Because of the lumen differential between regular and 3-way bulbs, the medium setting gives the same amount of light that you formerly had at the high setting—providing a savings of 27 watts per hour. The regular bulb at medium setting will last 6 times its rated life of 750 hours, or a total of 4500 hours. If you pay 7¢ per kwh for electricity, the savings amount to $8.50. Plus, 3-way bulbs are usually rated at 1200 hours, so you would need four of them at $2.20 each, to outlast this one regular bulb, at $1.50. That is another $7.30 in savings for an overall windfall of $15.80 over the life of the first bulb alone! The Convert-A-Bulb is UL listed and available exclusively from us. Buy one for **$10.00** ($1.95) #A495, two for **$18.00** ($1.95) #A496 or three for **$26.00** ($2.95) #A497.

Teach Your Walkman™ To Speak



Personal walk-around stereos have changed the listening habits of over five million Americans in the past few years. Now micro-FIDELITY has taken the same concept of micro-technology that produced the personal stereo cassette and FM stereo players and applied it to the new MI-FI MFS-6300 micro loudspeakers. They plug into any 120V AC receptacle and turn your walkaround into a total miniature component system that delivers exceptional sound anywhere without headphones! Each speaker has a built-in 3½ watt microchip amplifier. This extra boost in power combined with the "state-of-the-art" polymer-impregnated long fiber diaphragms produces a staggering amount of true amplified stereo sound from a remarkably small source. The speakers, just a little larger than a tennis ball, have a frequency response of 200-20,000Hz. They plug into any personal stereo cassette or FM stereo player and are provided with an integral protection circuit as well as an additional non-amplified input so you can use them with your home system. Maximum power handling is 20 watts per channel through the non-amplified section. **$85.00** ($5.00) #A555. If you don't already own a walkaround cassette player but would like a truly portable stereo system we can send you the MFS-6300 speakers and a MI-FI cassette player all packaged in a high quality nylon carrying case. The cassette player operates on 3 AA batteries (included) and comes with superlight open-air type headphones. **$195.00** ($10.00) #A556. On our player or yours the MFS-6300 speakers deliver you into a new world of acoustic possibility. They make any walkaround player a runaway favorite.

Watering Whiz



Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There *is* an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. Think of the steps waiting to be saved! This 50′ (that is a *lot* of reach) vinyl hose readily attaches to any household faucet. From there you just take the water where you want it—an easy-control hand allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off needed. This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attac ment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage a wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health well as its beauty. The complete indoor garden hose kit costs ju **$11.00** ($1.95) #A341.

Attract Dust Like A Magnet



If we ever compile a book on *T Old Ways That Were Better Ways*, will certainly include a chapter on t lambswool duster. This remarkab implement originated, the best we c tell, in 19th-century England where quickly put the feather-duster shame. On its own it actually attrac and holds dust like a magnet. The sta charge in the lambswool causes d literally to leap off surfaces where it h accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-br china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. When soiled, j wash it in warm soapy water. Let it dry, fluff it out and store hanging from a conveniently located hole at the end of its hand We are happy to offer a 20″ authentic lambswool duster for **$8.0** ($1.95) #A163.

Savings In The Shower



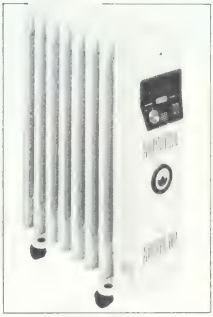
Tools for Living has discovered a finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver manufactured by Con-Serv, which cuts the use of water—*hot water*—in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. Remember, heating water throughout the year is second only to the cost of heating the house. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gals. of water—much of it heated—every day. According to U.S. Department Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family us 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of betwe $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. Con-Serv design the new Deluxe Fuel Saver without compromising comfort high quality. Although the amount of water is significantly r duced, it is aerated and accelerated—utilizing the Venturi pr ciple—for an invigorating shower. It delivers a comfortable forceful spray—forceful enough to quickly rinse shampoo suds o of a long, thick mane of hair. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offer "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping u Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily ov the standard ½″ shower head arm with pliers or a wrench—plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver $16.00 ($2.95) #A351.

Taylor-Made Tarp



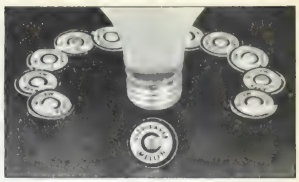
A conventional 8′ x 10′ canvas tarp weighs about 20 pounds. The bright blue Taylor Tarp, same size, comes in under 3 pounds. Using it is therefore easier by a factor of about 7. The Taylor Tarp is constructed of polyethylene netting, 10 strands to the inch each way, laminated between two sheets of polyethylene. It is virtually rip-proof as well as waterproof, mildewproof and rotproof. The edges and corners are rope-reinforced with brass grommets every 36″ or less. This is a tarp you can lay over the perennial bed, use for a porch windbreak, put up as a sunshade, or cover lawn equipment or a car. Toss it over the woodpile, in the back of the car, under a messy job. It stands up to a lot of hard use. It does almost everything plastic sheeting does—only better, longer, and more attractively. Until now these tarps have been sold primarily for farm and marine uses. We offer 3 sizes of Taylor Tarps: 7′6″ x 9′7″ for **$15.00** ($2.95) #A595; 9′5″ x 11′7″ for **$21.00** ($3.95) #A596 and 11′5″ x 19′7″ for **$40.00** ($3.95) #A597.

A Space-Age Space Heater



Most of us have turned back our thermostats in favor of saving energy and money. But on chilly mornings we really pay the price for our conservation efforts. If you own a portable radiator with an *automatic timer* you can keep your central heat down while still maintaining room comfort—24 hours a day! Such a heater is the DeLonghi, made in Europe where they've known for years that it makes sense to heat only space being occupied. *You can program this portable heater to go on and off in 15 minute intervals day or night.* For example, set it to go off a few minutes before you wake in the morning so your bathroom or bedroom has started to warm before you get up! The DeLonghi is permanently filled with a special diathermic oil that never needs replacing. The unit has three heat settings (600w, 900w and 1,500w) and provides a maximum of 5,100 BTUs at the highest setting. A built-in thermostat responds to room temperature, automatically shutting off when the room has reached your comfort level, automatically turning on again as the room cools. Chief among its many virtues is safety. The DeLonghi never gets dangerously hot, making it perfect for a child's bedroom or playroom. This unit has 4 wide base wheels for complete portability and eight heat fins. The DeLonghi is all-steel construction with a baked-on enamel finish in a neutral oyster color. It's 18″x8″x25″, weighs 38 lbs. and is UL listed. This model with automatic timer is not generally available in stores and costs $150.00 ($12.95) #A485. An identical model without the timer is made by DeLonghi and is available for **$140.00** ($12.95) #A487.

Lite Savers

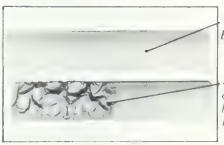


If you're tired of climbing ladders and getting into precarious (often dangerous) positions to change an out of the way light bulb then you should know about Mellin Lite-Savers. Adhered to the base of any *one way* bulb the Lite-Savers can extend bulb life from 50 to 100 times! Just think of the money saved in light bulbs! Most bulbs have a rated life of 750 hours or 32 days if used continuously. With Lite-Savers your bulbs will burn up to 75,000 hours or about eight years if used 24 hours a day. They're ideal for hallways, staircases, or anyplace where replacing light bulbs is a time consuming nuisance. You'll notice that Lite-Savers reduce light output so you may want to increase bulb wattage. They're safe, dependable and install quickly and easily with any one way bulb. The manufacturer offers a limited eight year warranty. We offer the Lite-Savers in a package of 6 for **$17.00** ($1.95) #A548 or 12 for **$27.00** ($2.95) #A549.

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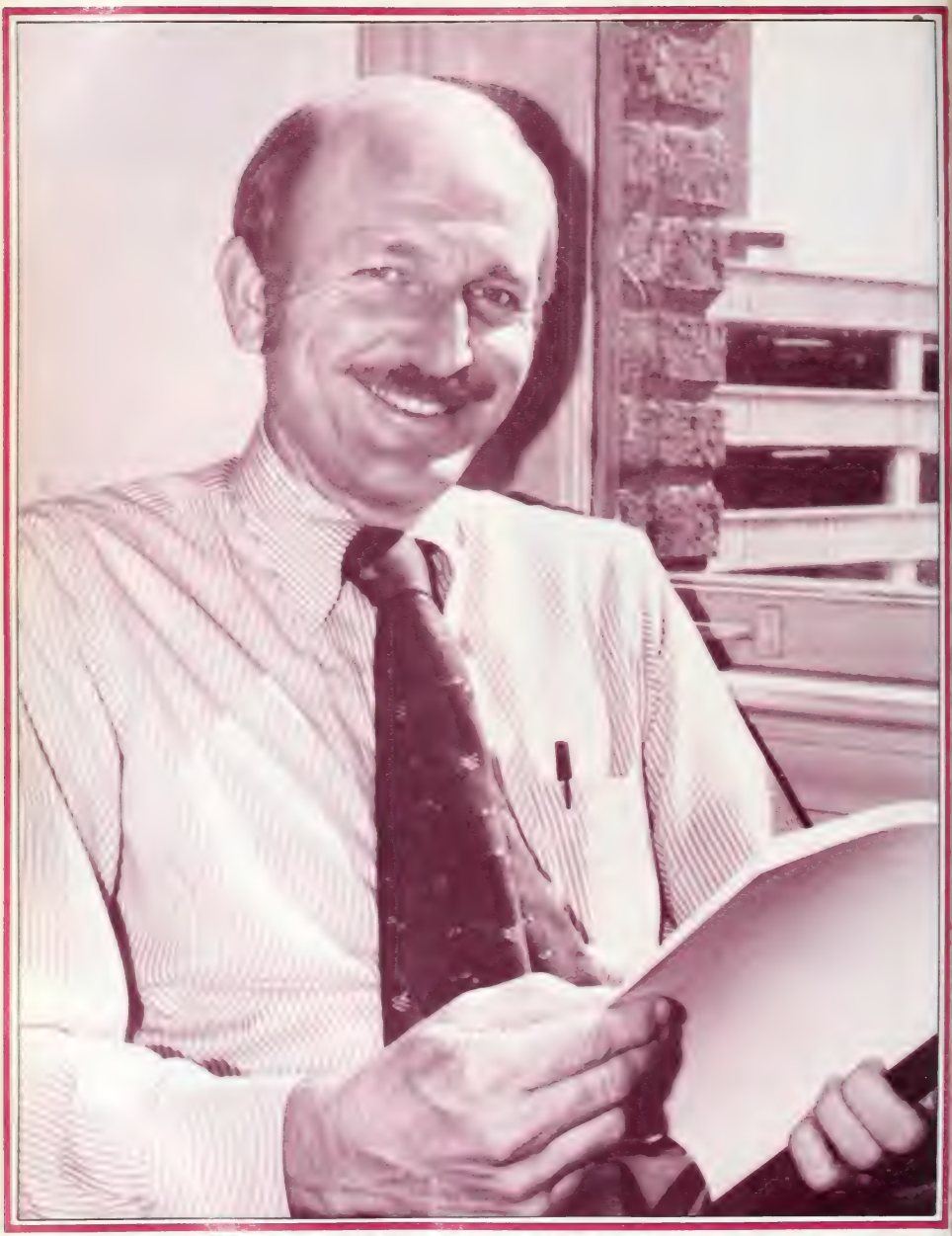
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Dan Bradley during his tenure as president of Legal Services Corporation.

CLOSETS OF POWER

BY TAYLOR BRANCH

As a high government official and a homosexual, Dan Bradley led a double life that is common among congressmen, White House aides, and others in the political world. Here is his story, and theirs.



POLITICS came naturally to Dan Bradley. Despite his handicap as a "children's-home boy," he was elected class president every year in high school. At Mercer University he beat out eleven candidates to become freshman class president, and served on nearly every board and society in the school—the classic popular student-activities zealot. "I knew their names, faces, majors, where they came from, and their activities at school. I made it my business to know." In his career as a leader of the movement to bring legal services to the poor, Bradley operated the same way. Perhaps unconsciously, he sought to become acquainted with a wide mass of people at a genuine though superficial level, and he sought their approval on the same plane. He was preoccupied with the general good and with the broader classes of human nature, as opposed to the quirks or depths of any individual. His knowledge of people was wide but thin, precise but not intimate.

All this made Dan Bradley a good politician. It also helped guard his secret even before he knew he had one. The ability to live in a web of broad but shallow relationships, to design a public face and hide a private one, served Bradley well in both worlds of his adult life. The political personality, it seems, is tailor-made for life in the closet.

In March of this year, Bradley became the highest federal official in American history to declare publicly that he was a homosexual. Upon resigning as president of the government-funded Legal Services Corporation, he told *The New York Times* that he had survived in politics only by living a double life of "sheer, unmitigated fear." He also told the *Times* that he had many homosexual friends who were congressmen, congressional staff people, White House aides, bureaucrats, and lawyers throughout Washington. They all shared a clandestine life inside the closet.

Taylor Branch, a former Washington editor of Harper's, *is co-author of* Labyrinth, *a book about the murder of Orlando Letelier, published by Viking Press. He is at work on a biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

As a powerful but frightened subculture, the closeted politicians in Washington have learned how to recognize, protect, communicate with, and seduce one another—all the while leading professional lives and keeping the "straights" largely unaware. In a capital where gossip, scandal, and political advantage are highly prized, this has been a remarkable collective feat.

Since "coming out," Bradley has traveled the country on a tour of celebration. He has met reinforcements—who are closeted mayors, city councilmen, clergymen, ordinary folk—and they have feted him as one who has done what they cannot bring themselves to do. He has also received moving testaments of acceptance from heterosexuals, strangers and old friends alike. Casting off practiced habits of deception, he has spoken and moved about freely for the first time in many years, like a newly released prisoner. In June, a woman friend asked him to be the "bridesmaid" at her wedding. Bradley agreed, laughing. He carried an enormous bouquet out of the church in the traditional recession alongside the best man, former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke.

It has been a gay time for Bradley in the literal sense of that word, which homosexual activists appropriated for themselves from the police slang for prostitutes. The word itself is telling. Bradley hopes that this high will not be followed by a relapse into self-doubt and self-loathing, like all the others, but he knows that he has rejected his lies more than he has accepted himself. "I hated being in the closet more than I hated being gay," he says. Moreover, he knows that many of the closeted gays who applauded his declaration are also threatened by it. He is a challenge to them; his general acceptance by heterosexuals undercuts their argument that they must remain in the closet to avoid persecution. Some gay public officials in Washington have criticized Bradley for drawing attention to them at a time when closeted politicians are menaced on several fronts. Shortly after the *Times* article on Bradley, an incipient scandal broke out in Washington over charges that several congressmen had had homosexual relations with young pages. Meanwhile, political groups affiliated with the Moral Majority have stepped up their mass solicitations for a war against the "homosexual conspiracy" in Washington, and conservative scandal sheets have surfaced, naming the names of liberal gay congressmen.

These and other forces could bring the enormous, hidden homosexual subculture under public scrutiny for the first time, with results ranging from suicide to improved mental health. Most people of all sexual persuasions wish to avoid the ordeal. Bradley doesn't, for reasons that are somewhat cloudy. Partly for personal catharsis and partly out of conviction that it is politically astute, he is revealing the details of a personal and political life in the closet. Dan Bradley's story is unique, of course, like everyone's. But it is at least one true version of life as a closeted homosexual in the political world.

I.

A Straight Pill



DAN BRADLEY formally entered the closet in 1968. At that time he had accumulated a grand total of "no more than ten seconds" of sexual experience with another person in his twenty-eight years. Those ten seconds convinced him that his life was cursed, as he had always feared.

He trembled and prayed on a trip from Philadelphia back to his office in Belle Glade, Florida, where he was a pioneer lawyer for migrant laborers and an early leader in the effort to make legal services available to the poor. During the lunch hour, Bradley locked the door and became dizzy and nauseated. In a state of panic, he began calling the psychiatrists listed in West Palm Beach, begging for an emergency appointment.

The psychiatrist he found shared an office with a dentist. Even in the late 1960s, some Florida analysts discovered that more patients would walk through the door if they could maintain the pretext of a sore tooth. Bradley welcomed the ruse. Greatly agitated, he told the doctor that he did not know why he was there. He blurted out half-sentences about symptoms ranging from dizzy spells and fits of nausea to attacks of inexplicable depression.

"Mr. Bradley," interrupted the psychiatrist, "are you a homosexual?"

Bradley said nothing. After a long silence, he opened his mouth to reply, but he began crying instead. A great tide obliterated his reserve. He wept, shook, and sobbed for over an hour. When it was over, the psychiatrist said, "Tell me about yourself." Bradley droned on for hours, disgorging himself again in words, looking expectantly at the doctor now and then in the hope that some detail might explain the beast.

Born into Georgia's once prominent Bulloch family, he had been packed off to a Baptist orphanage at the age of five, along with five brothers and sisters. His mother had died unexpectedly; his father was physically disabled and hospitalized; nothing was left of the family prestige except for memories of entertaining FDR in Georgia.

The 500 boys and girls at the Georgia Baptist Children's Home led dreary, regimented lives. All the boys were bused regularly to the local barber college, where rookie barber students gave them patchy, telltale haircuts. All the orphans checked their clothes out of the general storage room, trading up as they grew. Each child lived in a cottage with twenty-three others, ruled by a married couple. For

some reason, both the husband and the wife were called "the matron." Generally, the matrons were poor, devout, often illiterate Baptists, who received free room and board in return for meting out Old Testament discipline to their wards. Bradley, a seven-year-old bed wetter, was obliged to drink mixtures of turpentine and castor oil, and to take cold winter showers in front of his cottage mates.

Bradley pleaded with the psychiatrist to tell him that there was enough stigma in this background to explain a thousand cases of homosexuality. What tortured him was that no one else at the orphanage had turned out like him, though they had all grown up under the same conditions. And his brothers and sisters had inherited the same genetic pool. Why only Bradley?

And he had flourished at the orphanage. He embraced the church wholeheartedly. He learned the Bible almost by heart, and his devotion and quick wit made him something of a religious prodigy. When he was only twelve, preachers in the churches around Atlanta would call on Bradley to lead the entire congregation in prayer. By the time he was fourteen, preachers from all over Georgia would ask the children's home to send Bradley as a shining example of the church's good works. Bradley would stand, the worshipers would beam, and the preacher would announce that the young lad planned to become a minister.

From his earliest Bible classes, Bradley learned to banish the subject of sex to the distant recesses, along with other sins. He remembered hearing the bolder orphans, at puberty, bragging graphically of their conquests in the outside world, describing sex with girls pretty much the way they would talk of pulling the legs off grasshoppers. To Bradley, it was an alien world, devoid of the Christian spirit. He planned to cross the great gulf by a vague, mysterious route that had something to do with magic and marriage.

Bradley did not know exactly how females were supposed to make their entrance into his private world, but he became increasingly worried, over the years, when he detected no stirring at all. In Psychology 101, he felt a quickening when he read descriptions of sexual attraction among persons of the same sex. Soon he was in the college library reading treatises on homosexuality, careful to conceal them inside his regular textbooks.

Instinctively, he reread the Book of Job—many, many times. Logic, faith, and the beginnings of desperation convinced him beyond a doubt that his religious belief was being tested. Just as God had inflicted pestilence, personal bereavement, and all manner of physical suffering on Job, Bradley thought, He was now dangling an invitation to heathen despair in front of Bradley. Bradley had always been proud of his inner strength. With the Book of Job firmly in mind, he contained all thoughts of his fellow males while awaiting his deliverance. He abstained from sex during his teens and twenties, when his peers were coupling, reproducing, divorcing, and otherwise trying to match their genitals with their hopes.



THE CONFERENCE in Philadelphia was like many other gatherings of the "poverty bar" before and since. It ended on Friday. The next morning, several hours before his flight back to Florida, Bradley was reading the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and watching the skaters on an enclosed ice rink in an arcade beneath his hotel, when he sensed that others, also reading newspapers, were watching him. His fear told him that many were homosexuals congregated around the ice rink. Bradley walked quickly upstairs into the hotel bathroom. There, three urinals down, he was shocked to see a man standing casually waving an erect penis back and forth. Bradley had never seen another man's erection. He walked out, and paced the hotel floor in circles of confused fascination. Then he went back to the ice rink and posed nervously behind his *Inquirer*.

Presently, a blond young street urchin in blue jeans and a T-shirt walked up and said, "I'll let you suck me for five dollars." Bradley recoiled and fled without a word. He walked more circles and returned. When the young hustler repeated the proposition, Bradley nodded.

At Georgia Baptist Children's Home, the matrons had often punished Bradley by washing his mouth out with a lye-based soap. Now, after the hustler collected his money and left, Bradley rushed into the bathroom, lathered up a washcloth with octagonal soap, and scrubbed his mouth vigorously, feverishly. He told all this to the psychiatrist at West Palm Beach the following Monday, and on subsequent visits over the next several months. Bradley pressed the psychiatrist to reveal the accumulated wisdom of his profession on two questions: what causes homosexuality, and can it be cured? But nothing offered encouragement. He asked about the latest theories of behavior modification and shock therapy. He wanted a palliative, if not a complete, cure. "The words I used were a 'straight pill,'" he says. "I wanted to know if there was a 'straight pill' I could take to help me."

The doctor offered no pills. Gradually, Bradley abandoned his Job theory, though he would slide back to it many times. He could say to himself and the doctor that although he had never completed a sexual act with anyone, he was a homosexual. It was a permanent condition, not a divine test—or if it was a test, he had failed it. Bradley knew with greater clarity that he could never accept having sex with men; he would rather die. He realized that he could never be a lawyer, public servant, or politician and function as a homosexual. "I decided it was no big deal. I'd just be asexual, as I had been all my life."

II.

A Fraternity of Despair



WHEN THE Nixon administration came to power in 1969, Bradley managed to get himself assigned to the job of creating a new Legal Services program in the Virgin Islands, out of harm's way. He worked very hard and traveled constantly. During the six months he was based in the Virgin Islands, he took only one full day off—to wander on the white beaches of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The quickening came to him in advance of the specific realization that one section of the beach was special. Several hundred men were packed together, surrounded closely on all sides by mixed couples. "They all had their slinky little bathing suits and their effeminate mannerisms," says Bradley. "I knew what it was."

Bradley stood by a hot-dog stand to watch.

A sunbather approached and introduced himself vaguely as Tom the sailor. Bradley called himself Dan the lawyer. After some evasive conversation, the sailor departed, but then returned. Bradley kept a rendezvous that night and managed to taste piña colada and smoke marijuana. Later that night, he took Tom the sailor back to his hotel room for what amounted to the first sexual experience of his life.

When the fear rushed in on him the next day, he resolved to think of the incident as an isolated blip of failure after a year of successful repression. It helped that he did not feel the slightest personal interest in Tom the sailor, whom Bradley took to be from the unsavory caste of those who had given in to their homosexuality.

In 1970, after a brief tour of duty in Mississippi helping victims of Hurricane Camille, Bradley was called to Washington as special assistant to Terry Lenzner, President Nixon's director of Legal Services. There Bradley used his growing political skills to stave off attacks on Legal Services by disgruntled conservatives. Consumed by the political war, Bradley lived for months in a small hotel room, surrounded by phone messages and legal tracts. His discipline held up, and he never ventured into the seedy downtown areas where he imagined the homosexuals to be. For safety's sake, he tried to limit his few social engagements to female company and to pick out women with whom he sensed a nonsexual, "buddy" rapport. This plan did not always work, however. After many convivial lunches, one woman lured Bradley into bed by telling him that her fiancé had just informed her that he was a homosexual, and demanding comfort. "It was horrible," Bradley recalls, but some days later, she wrote to say that she had fallen in love with him.

To fend off this woman's advances, Bradley began inventing fairy tales about his romantic passion for a woman named Barbara, Terry Lenzner's assistant. His violent nerves lent an air of authenticity to the stories. Bradley began seeing more of Barbara, who became one of his lifelong friends. Rumors soon were circulating in the Legal Services office about Bradley's love triangle, and about how he was conducting himself with admirable restraint.

The charade taxed Bradley's limited social prowess for several months, until fate rescued him in the form of a promotional transfer to Atlanta as director of Legal Services for the Southern states. The job required a civil-service background investigation, and Bradley imagined how brilliant sleuths might locate Tom the sailor; but they didn't, of course.

One day in Atlanta, a high-powered real-estate woman named Sally* walked into Bradley's office and sat down on his lap. "She was the most aggressive woman I've ever known," he says. Sally announced that she had heard about him from mutual acquaintances in Washington. She listed a number of her illustrious Washington lovers from the past and wondered out loud when and how she would get to know Bradley. She pursued him, and eventually trapped him into a skiing trip.

On the drive north, Sally pestered him with questions: about his childhood, about the orphanage, about his mother. This confused and angered Bradley. "Why are you doing this to me?" he asked.

"Don't you see?" she replied. "Dan, I love you."

"What do you mean, you love me?" said Bradley. That weekend, he watched her make love to him. Passive and frightened once again, he made the experience palatable by fantasizing about Tom the sailor. After he dropped Sally off at her home back in Atlanta, Bradley drove through the downtown area, looking for a man. "I was so confused that I wanted to reassure myself that I was a homosexual," he says. "But I didn't know where to look."

Within a few days, he began a homosexual sex life for the first time, based in a fast-food restaurant in Atlanta called the Varsity. He found men at the Varsity and brought them home for one-night stands, giving them a phony name and phone number, never the same man twice.

Meanwhile, he and Sally became "an item" in the heterosexual world. "It definitely helped my reputation at Legal Services," says Bradley. Three or four times that year he made heterosexual love, and the act always precipitated an immediate emotional crisis. Finally, when there was widespread talk of marriage, guilt pushed Bradley to seek a way out. He broke off the affair by concocting a desperate story about being all balled up inside over growing up in the orphanage, and promising Sally that he would see a psychiatrist.

Alone one Friday night in his Atlanta apartment,

* A pseudonym.

reading Eisenhower's memoirs, Bradley toyed with the idea of visiting one of the gay bars he had been reading about in Atlanta's underground newspaper, the *Great Speckled Bird*. He thought of horror stories, fought them off with suitable cover stories, and finally wandered into the Cove at nine o'clock. "It was empty," he says. "I didn't realize that those places don't get going until nearly midnight." A kindly bartender explained the customs of night life and wrote out for him, on a napkin, the names of other local gay bars. A week later, sitting at a gay bar, Bradley found himself staring at one of his Sigma Nu fraternity brothers from Mercer. The two of them played cat and mouse with each other before the fraternity brother took the initiative, volunteering that he knew all the gay bars from Key West to Provincetown. In parlance, he was "coming out" to Bradley.

The fraternity brother introduced Bradley to a group of about ten closeted professionals who saw one another every weekend. One of them would cook dinner for the rest, and they would go out to one or more "cruising bars" at the "witching hour," looking for sex. Bradley joined them occasionally. The gatherings offered a lot of gossip and some chance of friendship. They also gave Bradley his first inkling that the closet could be a social place; for him it had always been solitary. But he was frightened that so many people knew his real name. He disliked their habit of asking new people to join the group. He refused to invite them to *his* apartment for dinner. And much of what he came to know about them was depressing. His fraternity brother, a chronic alcoholic, began calling him at home late at night, begging for help. Another member of the group overdosed on PCP pills and suffered a complete breakdown. To Bradley, these were some of the many signs that homosexuals were badly damaged people, a fraternity of despair. Gradually, he withdrew from the group and resumed the solitary life of the dedicated workaholic.

III.

The Wedding Ring

BUT BRADLEY couldn't sustain this pose. After a frightening episode when he found himself leaving a note with his real name and phone number on the car of a handsome blond student who lived across the street, Bradley resolved, with the help of yet another psychiatrist, to design a secure closet life for himself. The solution, he concluded, was to adopt an elaborate double identity. Knowing that he could not suppress his homosexual impulses entirely, he resolved to channel them into anonymous sex. To attain security he would give up any hope of emotional attachment, which he was convinced he didn't need.

Bradley resolved to shape an imaginary heterosexual life in Washington that he could talk about in Atlanta, and vice versa. He wanted to regularize and systematize the imaginary love letters, dates, and dilemmas, to minimize the risk of being discovered in a contradiction. So as not to neglect the small touches, he took out a subscription to *Playboy* magazine and displayed the copies prominently on his coffee table for the benefit of his visitors.

As for sex, he made a heartening discovery. He found the baths. Having read about the gay baths, he finally worked up the courage to visit one in Miami after delivering a speech to a local bar association. He joined under the name Doug Bailey. Then he walked behind the forbidding walls and saw hundreds of gay men wearing towels. It took Bradley about five minutes to discern that the whole place was expressly designed for promiscuous, anonymous sex, which was exactly what he had in mind. He felt secure behind the great walls. "I must have had sex with ten different guys that first night," he says. "I was like a kid in a candy store. Nobody talked about what anybody did for a living."

The Club Bath chain alone owned outlets in thirty-seven American cities. Bradley visited most of them. They were listed in his *Gay Guide* (which comes in a plain gray cover marked ADDRESS BOOK, suitable for the closet), along with the gay bars and nightclubs. To facilitate his secret gay exploits, Bradley instructed his secretary to tell all those who invited him to conferences that he *must* stay in a hotel and not with a host family. He told everyone that he liked to work in his room and go to bed early. Citing these unbreakable habits, he could excuse himself to his hotel room and then slip off to the baths.

Growing bolder with time, he bought a gold wedding band at a pawnshop and carried it with him wherever he went. He put it on during out-of-town meetings whenever he was sure that no one there knew his marital status. To Bradley, the ring was a magic time-saver. It kept strangers from trying to set him up with dates. People made fewer social demands on a married man traveling alone.

During a bar-association conference in New York, Bradley told his colleagues that he had to leave early to see relatives on Long Island, and went off to see the musical *Hair*. In the dark he fell under the spell of a particular member of the cast. After some anguish, he managed to get a note to this actor, and soon they arranged a rendezvous in Washington—the first time Bradley dared indulge his gayness in the heart of his professional world. Eddie was also the first man Bradley went to bed with more than once. "And we talked for days," he says. "He completed my gay education." Bradley learned that the closet would always be a fearful adventure, with more shadowy corners than he could imagine. He learned the rudiments of the lingo and the standard person-

ality types. He learned that the macho, short-haired "clone" look was coming into fashion, and he mastered the difference between "nellies," "twinkies," and "chickens." He asked a hundred questions about the "Hankie Code," which was printed in the front of his *Gay Guide*. A man entering a "cruiser bar" with a handkerchief on his left hip signaled a desire to be the active one, the doer. Those with one on the right hip wanted to be passive. Colors indicated the favorite sport. A dark blue hankie on the left wanted to "give" anal sex—on the right to "receive" it. There were fourteen colors in the code, reaching down to Dante and beyond. Maroon on the right wanted to receive an enema. Yellow on the left wanted to urinate in someone's face.

Comforted to find out that only a small percentage of homosexuals take part in such practices, Bradley sought to understand the far reaches of his new sociology. By now he was no longer the naïve Georgia preacher.

For every new low of closet life, there was a high. Primarily, for Bradley, it was the thrill of living in two separate worlds that came together but did not touch, saw each other but did not understand. He could live separately as Judd with pickups, Doug in the baths, and Dan in the halls of Congress. In camp circles, he was called Elizabeth. When Eddie left forever after a three-day spree, Bradley invented a new character in his life named Edie. He told people at Legal Services that he had fallen for her. He told them about letters from Edie, about phone calls and secret trysts—all based on the afterglow of the chorus boy from *Hair*. "I became a master of deception," says Bradley. "And it brought me vicarious joy every day to pull it off. That's one of the joys of the closet. There's no denying it."

In recent years, gay scholars have laid claim of kinship to an astonishing number of big names in the history of art and ideas. Their list is quite impressive, even when it is stripped of the weaker and more tentative assertions (such as Shakespeare): Plato, Walt Whitman, Somerset Maugham, Noel Coward, Leonardo da Vinci, Cole Porter, Aristotle, King James I (sponsor of the King James version of the Bible), W. H. Auden, Tchaikovsky, Francis Bacon, George Santayana, Herman Melville, John Maynard Keynes, Michelangelo, E. M. Forster, and Horatio Alger, Jr., to name a few. Gay scholars usually lament the failure of nearly all the masters to come out and write explicitly about homosexual themes. The argument assumes that homosexuality is an engine of creativity and that the closet is a brake. Neither assumption is necessarily true. Maugham or Melville out of the closet might have written duller, not better, books. The closet itself may be a prime source of the internal friction that produced the works claimed for the gay hall of fame. After all, coming out is now associated with improved mental health, contentment, self-acceptance, and a host of states inimical to the unruly artistic temperament.



AFTER HIS landslide reelection in 1972, President Nixon moved swiftly to dismantle the poverty program, including Legal Services. The great political battle of Bradley's life was engaged. Nixon's director of the Office of Economic Opportunity was a flinty Kentucky Republican named Alvin Arnett, who surprised the poverty-law network by being open-minded. Arnett was so impressed by an impassioned three-hour speech Bradley gave in defense of legal aid for the poor that he tried to appoint Bradley head of the national Legal Services program. But the White House vetoed the idea. Bradley proposed a bureaucratic maneuver: Arnett should bypass the White House by appointing *himself* head of Legal Services and making Bradley his special assistant, to run the program in everything but title. Arnett agreed. Thus Bradley arrived for his first full-time stint in Washington with both his sexual life and his political mission in the closet.

Before leaving Atlanta, Bradley invited his old girlfriend Sally to dinner at an elegant French restaurant. She was getting married. Bradley felt guilty about having manipulated her during their bizarre affair and thought that she, of all people, would be happy to hear that he was homosexual. It would explain why he had hurt her.

At dinner he dropped teasing hints about a big secret. Sally pounced on them as usual, wanting to know instantly. Then Bradley backpedaled, unable to say the words. He promised the secret after dessert, then after coffee. Finally, he stopped stirring the coffee and said bluntly, "Sally, I'm a homosexual."

She looked stricken. Bradley knew instantly that his plan had gone awry. When she insisted that it was impossible, he could only reply that he ought to know better than she.

"What about those times we made love?" she asked.

Bradley sighed. "Well, that's not easy to talk about. But if you must know, I got through them by fantasizing that you were another man."

She swallowed and began to cry, softly and then hysterically. Before Bradley could say anything else, she ran through the restaurant into the ladies' room.

Bradley absorbed stares from the surrounding tables. Fifteen minutes later, he asked the manager to send someone to check on Sally, who returned looking spent and resigned. "Dan, it's sad that you're a homosexual," she said. "Does it mean you'll never get married and have children?"

Bradley was too busy and too frightened to lead a homosexual life in the capital. Whenever he became sexually desperate, he would arrange a quick business trip to Philadelphia and sneak off to the Spartan Baths. In Washington, he lived only politics. He thought he liked it that way.

Since Nixon was determined to abolish the OEO, Bradley and his cohorts determined to save Legal

Services by installing them in an independent corporation. Nixon vetoed one bill, and another fell by the wayside, but a third attempt passed Congress, and Nixon, weakened by Watergate, signed it. Bradley was triumphant.

One day, without warning, he started crying in his office at OEO headquarters. It came so suddenly that Bradley had to make up a story of family tragedy for his secretary. Then, when he could not stop, he locked the door and waited for the fit to pass. After an hour, he was panicky. Still crying, he placed a call to a closeted psychiatrist he had met during his brief social period in Atlanta. He begged for help, saying over and over that he was "incapacitated" for no reason, just when everything was going well.

The Atlanta psychiatrist advised Bradley that his [the psychiatrist's] old college lover was now a professor in the psychiatry department at a medical school in the Baltimore-Washington area. That same afternoon, still crying, Bradley drove to the psychiatrist's private office. The doctor talked openly of his being gay, but he was deeply closeted himself, with photographs of his wife and children on his desk. Bradley introduced himself and said, "I *think* I'm a homosexual." He emphasized his doubts. Years later, Bradley still marvels at the power of retrenchment. "After all I'd been through, I tried to act like it was something completely new," he says. He and the doctor plunged back into the fundamental questions.

IV.

What Makes the Blood Rise



In his *Problemata*, Aristotle (lover of his student Hermias) explained that some men are constructed physically so that some or all of their semen "settles" in their "fundament" instead of their testicles. In these cases, he declared, there cannot be enough "force" to expel the residue of semen, which then cools and congeals. Aristotle concluded that these fundament-oriented men naturally desired to submit to sexual intercourse, adding that if the semen "collected" in both places in the proper mixture, a man might be required to seek two pleasures.

Plato took a different approach in his *Symposium*, arguing that man had descended from an ideal type of being with four legs and four arms. When the gods divided this being into two human types, Plato suggested, some of the resulting males and females retained yearnings for the lost half of themselves. The human psyche, having been originally both male and female, would always have a fluidity at its core that could become manifest as homosexuality.

Plato and Aristotle established the two broad schools of theory that have been in contention ever since: the "physical" school and the ethereal, "environmental" one. The former holds that homosexuality is a predetermined aspect of a person's physical inheritance—like baldness or flat feet or eye color, except that it is invisible. In modern terms, a physicalist would argue that homosexuality is a mysterious part of the genetic package. An environmentalist, on the other hand, believes that the condition is not fixed, that it can be affected by factors ranging from mass culture to individual will. This notion introduces the dreaded or welcome element of choice; homosexuality is a taste to be acquired or rejected. Sigmund Freud, patron of the modern environmentalists, asserted that all human beings have pansexual urges when they are young, that with maturity these urges are resolved into healthy heterosexual channels, and that homosexuality is an "arrested development" caused by parent-child maladjustment. He was vague on the last point, leaving his followers to quarrel inconclusively over whether the culprit was a weak father, an overbearing mother, or something else. The essential environmental thesis is that the cause, and the cure, lie somewhere within the potential reach of psychoanalysis, though they would not be easy to find.

Each of the two major schools lives in part off the failure of the other. Otherwise, the physicalists argue that only a physical, rigidly determined homosexuality could have survived the unspeakable tortures of history. Through a thousand years of ghastly executions, homosexuals refused to renounce their practices—with a tenacity that rivaled the more highly publicized religious martyrs. Even during the decadent years of the Roman Empire, the law condemned homosexuals to execution by fire "in the sight of the people." In 1327, English noblemen executed the homosexual King Edward II by ramming a hot iron into his bowels. During the religious wars after the Reformation, sexual deviance was perhaps the commonest expression of heresy, and religious tribunals sent homosexuals to the stake.

In more recent times, homosexuals have been consigned to mental institutions, where doctors have tried to cure them with no-nonsense applications such as castration, lobotomy, and electric shock treatment. None of these has worked. Remarkably, many homosexuals have *volunteered* for these procedures in the desperate hope of escaping their torment. In 1894, Guy Olmstead had himself castrated in Chicago after all other treatments had failed, but the miserable Olmstead soon told his doctor that men still caused him to "have erections, commit masturbation, and have the same passion as before." From 1941 to 1943, Dr. Samuel Liebman subjected a black transvestite homosexual to enough shock treatment to electrify a small town, with many regrettable side effects but no effect at all on his sexual preference. More recently, Dr. J. Srnec and Dr. K. Freund reported to the scientific community the

disheartening results of their experimental aversion therapy. "Psychic driving" and assorted miracle drugs have failed, along with countless home remedies and psychoanalytic tricks.

If sexuality were fungible, say the physicalists, homosexuality would have been expunged long ago at the stake or in the laboratory. This leads to the notion that homosexuals cannot reform "any more than a leopard can change its spots," which in turn supports the gay-rights position that homosexuals should be treated like any other physically determined minority group.

The environmentalists are more comfortable in theory than in the laboratory. They say homosexuality is *behavior*, not a pigment or a shape of the skull, and that it is difficult to change and explain only because it comes from the deepest chambers of the human psyche, where sex and survival wrestle with the awareness of death. Admittedly, they say, cures are rare, but at least they are not nonsensical, as is the idea of changing an African into an Oriental. They point to examples of voluntary homosexuality, citing feminists who claim to have "adopted" lesbianism for political reasons. On the mass scale, they say that fluctuations in the incidence of homosexuality throughout history are incompatible with physicalist theory.

But sexuality is a way to be, not a way to think. No person works through these essentially emotional questions on a plane of weightless rationality, and it is all too easy to be an environmentalist in theory and a physicalist in practice. Fear and anxiety tend to produce physicalists, dividing humanity into sexual camps. The shifting, polymorphous sexuality that one might expect from environmental theory does not exist. People become one thing or another, with most homosexuals wanting to believe they had no choice of becoming otherwise and most heterosexuals wanting to believe they have no chance. Fear brings the elements of confusion together on the wispy issue of bisexuality, which is a threat to both sides. Homosexuals laugh at bisexuality as a pretense or as a mode of transportation—today's bisexual is tomorrow's homosexual. Heterosexuals tend to look at bisexuality as the trapdoor on a scaffold of sex. Both see bisexuals as arid, deathly utopians, utterly liberated and therefore inhuman.

The unbearable, wonderful urgency of sex divides the camps. Homosexuals fear heterosexuals because they have always performed the lobotomies and made the rules—and also because they carry all the advantages of cultural transmission, such as children, a clear meaning for the word "generation," and membership in the most resilient and universal institution in human history (however battered the family has become). Looking in the other direction, heterosexuals are daunted by the thought of gay people living without these very amulets—casting them off, breaking taboos, and then somehow going on with life more or less like everyone else. Gays are reminders of each life as a discrete, vanishing particle, separate from the glue of custom.

On the issue of homosexuality, ignorance and dogmatism stick closely together, as they often do, but there are also odd combinations of hatred, deception, righteousness, debasement, and joy. As a species, human beings usually refuse to be humbled by the most prosaic aspects of our condition. We come in different colors, and we copulate in different ways, with different things at heart. These simple matters of affect raise passions that regularly confound the pretensions of civil society.

As a theoretical question, the nature and cause of homosexuality continues to mock the pretenders to knowledge. They make bold assertions in the high ether of abstraction, and they hold firm opinions on the more humdrum issues of taste, such as what it is about each gender that makes the blood rise—the smile, the thigh, or the giggle of passion. Only rarely do they see or care how difficult it is to escape character in order to gain the perspective to define it. Homosexuals, driven by need for an answer, often come to the conclusion Bradley reached with the counsel of five learned psychiatrists. "I believe I was a homosexual from the moment I was born," he says. "But I don't know what that means."

V.

The Recognition Game



In 1974, as President Ford was preparing to name the board members for the new Legal Services Corporation, Bradley decided to retreat to his old job in Atlanta, where there was less risk of being fired by the Republicans. Before leaving, he told his secret to a married woman friend named Susan, whose air of wise maternity had always elicited his trust. During the long, convoluted buildup to his speech, Bradley projected such a piercing melancholy that she began crying in anticipation of the worst. When Bradley finally got the words out, she cried, "I thought you had leukemia or something. I don't care if you're gay. My *father's* gay!"

In Atlanta, Bradley found that poverty law had lost the spark of a ministry for him. He told his fifth psychiatrist that he was basically a frustrated politician. But he knew running for office would mean going even deeper into the closet. Coldly analyzing his past, he decided that he had already made too many mistakes. He would be exposed. Careful as he had been, he had gone to too many bars in Atlanta.

Fate intervened again when his Washington bosses drafted him to become the new Legal Services regional director in San Francisco, gay capital of the United States. Bradley pretended the transfer would be onerous, but secretly he was celebrating the move

as a stroke of luck. He was headed for the briar patch, where he could "deal with" his homosexuality at last. Perhaps he could drift out of the closet there and even find a long-term lover.

None of this was to be. In San Francisco, Bradley lived in the famous Castro area, surrounded by 35,000 homosexual neighbors. The entire support structure of his life was gay—his bank tellers, grocers, pharmacists, landlords, and street venders. But he kept his distance, behaving like a closeted heterosexual. Now he lived in *two* closets, one at the office and one at home. He confined his social life to the anonymity of the baths. He shunned the bars and never attended parties.

When Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign came along in 1976, Bradley made use of his old Georgia connections to sign on. After Carter's victory over Gerald Ford, Bradley closed his affairs in San Francisco and moved to Miami to contemplate his future. He believed that homosexuality had capped his career in politics, but he could not bring himself to forswear politics and come out of the closet. His objection to homosexuality was no longer exclusively moral. He was between worlds. He thought of rejecting politics for legal practice, freeing himself for whatever private life felt comfortable.



SHORTLY AFTER the Carter inauguration, Bradley was approached about becoming the Florida commissioner of racing and pari-mutuel wagering. Gov. Reubin Askew was looking for someone above reproach, and Bradley, who didn't know a bookie from a bookmark, was perfect. No one could suspect him of ties to gamblers or the Mafia.

Bradley visited Hialeah Race Track and was captivated by the manicured grounds, the pink flamingoes inside the track, the splashes of color, and the rhythmic theater of horses, money, and people. Governor Askew soon talked him into taking the job, provided, of course, that Bradley passed the exhaustive state security investigation. The mere thought of it threw Bradley into a panic. Everything changed overnight. He ceased contemplating the possibility of drifting into a gay lifestyle and began feverishly erasing all traces of it from his past. Since leaving the government payroll he had allowed himself to spend some time in gay bars. When state investigators asked for snapshots of him, Bradley became obsessed with fear that they would show his photograph to the bartenders, or, even worse, to the attendants at the Club Bath, which Bradley had been frequenting now for five years.

Bradley nearly went to pieces when one of his Coconut Grove neighbors stopped by to tell him that the state investigators had asked her a number of questions, mostly about his sex life. They had asked specifically if he was a "queer." Bradley suffered a thousand visions of exposure and ruin before the woman volunteered that she thought it outrageous that the state was delving into a man's private life, and she didn't mind admitting that she had lied to them, saying that Bradley was seeing a lot of her own daughter. This was not true, of course, and the woman told Bradley that it could not be true since the daughter was a lesbian. This announcement made Bradley's jaw drop and his mind spin. He found himself thanking her profusely, and she eventually became a trusted friend.

The news of the sexual emphasis put Bradley's cover-up into high gear. He enlisted the help of two lawyers in Miami, a married couple with whom he had shared his secret. He coached them with plausible stories of heterosexual romance. They could say they'd heard him talk a lot about Sally, Bradley's old girlfriend, and about Barbara, Terry Lenzner's former assistant (now a lawyer). Bradley had shared his secret with Barbara a year earlier, only to hear her say she had already figured it out for herself (which had disturbed him). Bradley also threw in the name of his neighbor's lesbian daughter. He and his two accomplices agreed on the dates and places of incidents they would cite, complete with details of lovers' quarrels, public necking, and a pregnancy scare or two. Bradley backstopped the whole plan with calls to Susan and Sally, and then held his breath. Some weeks later, Florida's chief investigator summoned Bradley to a hurried meeting at Miami Airport and told him, "Dan, either you are a man who is completely clean and above suspicion, or you are the biggest fraud I've ever investigated."

As commissioner, Bradley was the Jehovah figure of the Florida gambling industry, scowling from the front pages when angry and smiling on the society pages when he pronounced his blessing on a new season. And as a public figure in the state, he attended at least two or three major social functions a week, which presented an escort problem. The same friends who had covered for him in the security investigation came through with a mixture of unwitting dates and willing "beards." Sometimes he would go alone. As a result of this socializing, a *Miami Herald* reporter called one day to announce that Bradley would be featured in a series on Miami's most eligible bachelors.

Bradley had to submit to the established treatment: posed photographs, a guided tour of his "bachelor home," and a two-hour interview at which a bubbly blonde reporter wanted to know everything. She quizzed Bradley on his ideal woman, his marriage and family plans, his romantic history, his favorite singles bars, his advice for young lovers, his turn-ons and his turn-offs. "That was the most difficult interview I ever had," Bradley recalls, laughing painfully. "I had to make up the whole thing."

When the story appeared in the *Herald*, Bradley's gay friends in Miami teased him mercilessly. At-

tendants at the Club Bath or drinking buddies from the gay bars would quote from his remarks and howl with laughter. Bradley decided to lie low for a while, which his demanding schedule made easy. This had been an asexual period for him anyway, even by his standards. He had been sneaking into the Club Bath one night every few weeks and into a gay bar perhaps once a month.

The danger and the contradictions intensified the thrill of his double life as Commissioner Bradley, the upright official who tried to ferret out, expose, and eliminate the secret underworld of gambling, and as "Doug Bailey," who would sneak off to join a different underworld in restaurants and gay bars, some of which, he heard, were controlled by the same organized-crime figures he chased in the day.

Matters became even more complicated when Anita Bryant's antihomosexual crusade sprang up in Miami and swept the nation. Bradley's boss, Governor Askew, announced his support of Bryant's movement at a press conference just after a meeting with Bradley. So the racing commissioner found himself standing in a room full of reporters and television cameras when, in response to a question, Askew said he would never tolerate any homosexuals in his administration. "I was amused, mostly," says Bradley. "And I was proud of pulling it off."

VI.

Bachelor Lawyers of Washington



WHEN ASKEW left office early in 1979, Bradley temporarily agreed to return to Washington as consultant to the Legal Services Corporation, pending appointment of a new president in June. He checked into a hotel in the capital, where he had not lived for nearly five years, and resolved not to be a hermit. He was out of politics forever, he told himself. He would soon take an extended vacation to Europe and "find himself." Meanwhile, he would enjoy himself in Washington for the first time.

He went to a different gay bar nearly every night —Equus, Rascals, the Eagle, and many others. At first he was surprised to see so many people he knew from his political past. There were lawyers, lobbyists, bureaucrats, and aides from Capitol Hill. After playing the recognition game, Bradley would gossip with them about the closet. Not surprisingly, he found that there were many different levels of paranoia. Some of the Capitol Hill aides would speak rather openly about their bosses, their jobs, and even their lovers. Others would say only that they worked "on the Hill." They all spoke of people they knew who were more snugly in the closet—of people who avoided gay bars altogether and confined their gay lives to parties, mostly in Georgetown. More secretively, some officials seemed to have relatively stable lovers and hardly ever ventured out at all. Others might or might not have been spotted at various "cruising areas" in the capital. Finally, there was a "mystery group" of congressmen, military men, and others whose sexual nature was debated even among the homosexual cognoscenti.

Some of Bradley's contemporaries introduced him to some younger, Adonis types among Capitol Hill aides. These being his chosen sexual partners, he pursued brief affairs with a few of them and became talking friends with several others. He attended a few all-gay dinners and parties, including one in Virginia that turned out to be an orgy. (Bradley wound up in bed with a lawyer from the Department of Justice.) He heard about gay art classes and softball teams, about the lively debates at the Gertrude Stein Club (Democratic) and the Walt Whitman Club (Republican), and he was invited to join a rather campy organization called Bachelor Lawyers of Washington (BLOW). He concluded that closeted life in the capital might not be as grim as he had always assumed.

This became a factor in Bradley' plans when the consensus candidate of the various Legal Services cabals, F.A.O. Schwartz, Jr., decided at the last moment that he would not accept the job as president. This caused a crisis. Pressure mounted for Bradley to offer himself as the emergency choice. He equivocated. Although he had sworn to himself never to take a step back deeper into the closet, his brief sojourn in Washington had changed his view of the situation. He wanted the job. "I finally decided that I was not going to come out of the closet, but at the same time I was not going to be uptight about it all the time," he recalls.

He moved into a spacious Washington office and spent the first few months lobbying a $321 million appropriation bill through Congress. At night, he went to BLOW meetings and to all-gay cocktail parties in Georgetown. The parties became a new dimension in his life. He learned that many closeted officials were in the habit of sleeping in the early evening so they could party and "cruise" late at night. He learned the informal etiquette by which gay politicians communicated their level of secretiveness. One rule, for example, was never to introduce anyone more specifically than they introduced themselves. Bradley never introduced himself as president of Legal Services, and he came to expect others to follow his cue.

Gossip among friends was another matter. Everyone was fair game then, and "who's who in the closet" was a leading subject of conversation. Bradley was skeptical of some of the names he heard bandied about in Congress, even when he heard them from staff members. But when some of those congressmen themselves showed up at the cocktail parties to gossip about their colleagues, he began to change his mind. Only two or three congressmen

dared to show themselves at the parties, but Bradley came to know a score of others—first by gossip, then by one or two coded remarks at a private meeting, and finally when he pleaded with some closeted members of Congress not to vote against gay-rights legislation.

His official duties required him to attend more straight parties than gay ones. Bradley impressed his old friend Barbara into duty as his regular date. She went, and all was well until election year, 1980. Then he slipped back into the familiar depression. When a hysterical crying fit came over him one afternoon, he finally called his fourth psychiatrist, the closeted ex-lover of number five. Bradley arranged to begin emergency treatments once a day at 4:45 P.M., which caused security problems. By a long-standing rule, his secretary was required to know his whereabouts at all times. So Bradley had to make up stories every day that would make him temporarily unavailable. He was meeting the plumber in the basement, far away from the phone. Or he was picking up his car from a repair shop whose name he couldn't remember. Some days he would simply flout the rules and declare that he was disappearing. Years earlier, he might have encouraged the speculation that he was trysting with a secret female lover, but now he refused that much of a concession to the closet.



BRADLEY had long since accepted the idea that homosexuality was powerful enough to twist a person into any shape and to make him lie to himself and anyone else, as necessary. "There's no end to it," he says. Still, he was surprised at first to hear gossip that some of the most visible leaders of the anti-homosexual Moral Majority and New Right were themselves closeted gays. He knew better than to place hard bets against the drumbeat of the gay grapevine, but he still associated homosexuals with civil libertarians. His friends among the closeted congressmen were liberal Democrats like himself.

For at least a year before their arrests he had been hearing about Rep. Jon Hinson and Rep. Robert Bauman at the gay parties. Hinson, a conservative Mississippi Republican, was said to cruise the roughneck bars, and Bauman was said to have been picking up "chickens" (young male hustlers) for many years outside a gay bar called the Chesapeake House. The tawdry aspects of the sex did not bother Bradley, since he took them for granted as a consequence of life in the closet. Congressmen, he assumed, might avoid even the baths for fear of being recognized.

What bothered Bradley was the politics, particularly Bauman's. A married Roman Catholic with four children, Bauman was a founder and former national chairman of Young Americans for Freedom. He was also co-founder and national chairman of the American Conservative Union. In the House, he was widely considered the most intelligent, promising leader of the New Right—a crusader against busing, abortion, deficit spending, communism, and homosexuality. Bradley had heard the rumors about J. Edgar Hoover and others who were said to have expressed their self-hatred on a grand scale in politics, but he could not quite understand how anyone could strive for leadership of a movement that sought to persecute his own kind. Yet both Hinson and Bauman were arrested in 1980 for precisely the kinds of homosexual solicitations that the gay grapevine had ascribed to them.

The Reagan administration took power in 1981 on a pledge to abolish the Legal Services Corporation. Bradley sent up the emergency battle flags once again and tried to rally support in Congress. Ironically, to Bradley's utter mortification, the first test came on an amendment proposed by Rep. Larry McDonald of Georgia to bar Legal Services lawyers from cases involving discrimination against homosexuals. Numerous liberal congressmen told Bradley that they would have to vote with McDonald against their principles. They spoke of political suicide and asked his understanding. Bradley kept nodding, but he knew that more than a dozen of these liberals were themselves closeted homosexuals. He second-guessed their motives, and then his own. It seemed impossible for closeted people to separate political interests from personal ones. The McDonald Amendment passed the House in June 1981 but failed in the Senate.

Bradley raged against the hypocrisy that he saw in his own second thoughts and in the defections of the gay congressmen. They were working against themselves. Ominously, the threat to Legal Services and to gay rights in general seemed to be growing, and Bradley thought that some of the very congressmen leading McDonald's movement were themselves closeted homosexuals. This he could not fathom, except to believe that it all came from the insidious workings of the closet. Having finally isolated the closet as the archenemy in his private life, Bradley now faced it in politics as well.

VII.

The Homosexual Wars



HOMOSEXUALITY has long been associated with the political Left. After Sen. Joseph McCarthy made sensational news with his long lists of alleged "communists" in the government, few people noticed that most of the government employees actually sacked in the witch-hunt were classified as "perverts." At the height of the McCarthy era, the word

"subversive" was commonly used as a synonym for "pervert," "deviate," and "communist" alike. "I don't say every homosexual is a subversive, and I don't say every subversive is a homosexual," conceded Sen. Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska in 1950. "But a man of low morality is a menace in the government, whatever he is, and they are all tied up together."

This attitude survived the Cold War. When Walter Jenkins, President Johnson's closest aide, was arrested for homosexual acts in 1964, commentators expressed the utmost shock that the malady had afflicted someone from the mainstream of American politics. It was a novel development, but at least Jenkins was a Democrat in a liberal administration.

In the 1970s, Judge G. Harrold Carswell, who had been President Nixon's Supreme Court nominee, was arrested in a public rest room for homosexual acts, and so was Gen. Edwin Walker, the flamboyant John Bircher who had "commanded" the white students during the 1962 Ole Miss riots. They were dismissed as kooks who had been unable to make it in the "real world" of Washington politics.

Then, in 1978 and 1979, stories broke about the arrests of two certified Washingtonians—Reps. Fred Richmond and Joseph P. Wyatt. In 1980, an underground Washington newspaper alleged that Rep. William Moorhead had been having an extramarital affair with a male/female "hermaphrodite" named Terri Hall, who had taken grievances against the congressman to lawyers and the press. Moorhead did not seek reelection in 1980, and has become a political consultant. These three were mainstream politicians—but at least they were Democrats. Finally, with the arrests of Hinson and Bauman, political homosexuality seemed to have spread across the entire political spectrum.

If this trend has dismayed the previously immune Republican stalwarts, it has brought surprisingly little joy to homosexual activists, many of whom had grown fond of their leftish political conceptions. They thought of their enemy as the system, represented by conservative, capitalist Republicans. Now they found themselves with a conundrum: if gay liberation is the antithesis of capitalist values, why is it that the burgeoning homosexual subculture of the last decade has manifested itself largely in crass, commercial hedonism—in an explosion of discos, hotels, nightclubs, and gay bars, all designed for maximum luxury and the ten-minute sexual affair? In Washington and other large cities, the most active, visible members of the homosexual community tend to be affluent white professionals, whose sexual identity is their only claim to oppressed status. Highly privileged otherwise, they agitate for entrepreneurial freedom and a stable currency, like good Republicans.

As sexual solidarity diminishes and political antagonism grows, homosexuals tend to behave more like traditional grasping politicians, who will use any weapon at their command. The most dangerous weapon available to both sides is the closet. As a political issue, the closet raises explosive psychological forces of hatred and self-hatred.

Closeted homosexuals have been lining up on both sides of an impending war. Right-wing activists, including many closeted homosexuals, have sought to drive homosexuals from public life. Before the 1980 elections, the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) and allied groups targeted House and Senate liberals for defeat partly because of their tolerance of homosexuality. The Reagan administration supported the McDonald Amendment to prohibit the representation of homosexuals by the Legal Services Corporation. In September 1981, the Rev. Jerry Falwell held a press conference on the steps of the Capitol, urging Congress to veto a revision of the District of Columbia legal code that would have legalized all forms of sexual activity between consenting adults. Falwell sent out a nationwide funding appeal, headlined: SODOMY AND BESTIALITY WILL BE LEGAL IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL UNLESS YOU ACT NOW! Congress vetoed the revision in October (the only time it has ever overridden the District's home-rule powers on a matter unrelated to the prerogatives of the federal government), and Falwell's campaign received such enthusiastic support that he sent out more appeals for money. "If this gay conspiracy succeeds," he wrote, "it will be just one more step downward for America, towards moral decadence."

In February 1982, Falwell promised his followers that he would turn over a list of the "gay conspirators" to Congress. (Ironically, the "page scandal" broke not long thereafter, indicating once again that many of the gay conspirators may be *in* Congress.) Meanwhile, editors from the *Spotlight*, journal of the far-Right Liberty Lobby, began publishing a scandal sheet called *Deep Backgrounder*, naming more than a dozen allegedly homosexual members of Congress in the first issue. And on the spy front, word leaked out about HOMEX (Homosexual Extortion), the FBI's twenty-year operation to identify prominent homosexuals in Washington, ostensibly to prevent their being compromised by the Russians. Columnists quoted unnamed investigators to the effect that the Russian KGB had been actively recruiting homosexuals in the capital.



THUS the pressure builds on the Right, and if President Reagan continues to be "Carterized" into vacillating impotence on the economy and the Russians, the chance of a scapegoating crusade increases. No one is more aware of this possibility than homosexual activists themselves, and they have been engaged in a lively debate over how to respond.

Handicapped, as always, by the fact that every one of their influential officials in Washington is closeted, they have tended to the traditional posture, which means lying low, hoping that the attack will not be severe, and trusting in the power of the civil libertarians and their own hidden numbers. There is, however, a minority school of thought that disparages this posture as similar to that of some European Jews before the Holocaust. The militants want to fight fire with fire by exposing the closeted homosexual leaders of the Republican Party and the New Right. They propose to deprive the homosexual question of its political slant by giving unfriendly politicians a shove toward the closet door. This tactic of enforced honesty is called "outage."

Perry Deane Young will strike the first major blow for "outage" this November, when his new book *God's Bullies* will be published, naming NCPAC president Terry Dolan as a closeted homosexual. Young, an openly gay Washington writer who is the co-author of Dave Kopay's best-selling book about homosexuality in professional football, believes that the paramount issue is hypocrisy. Dolan, he says, forfeited his right to privacy by advocating political measures inimical to the rights of his fellow closeted homosexuals.

Young says that Terry Dolan is a more important figure than Robert Bauman, his former colleague on the staff of the Young Americans for Freedom. As the man in control of the wealthiest political-action committee on the far Right, Dolan meets regularly with members of Reagan's staff and has breakfast once a week with Jerry Falwell. But at night, says Young, he goes to gay bars, including a popular "leather bar" called the Eagle. In his book, Young describes one of Dolan's evenings that began in the Eagle and ended in bed with a man named Richard Anderson, from whom Young has a supporting affidavit.

Young says that the closeted subculture in Washington is so large that its members have adopted the traditional habits of the capital, in which political enemies often roast each other on the job and then fraternize that evening. As a result, antihomosexual homosexuals like Robert Bauman and (allegedly) Terry Dolan are frequently encountered by their political opponents, who are sometimes friends or lovers. "I know of at least ten other prominent leaders of the Republican Right who have either had sex with friends of mine or gone to gay parties with them," Young writes. Dan Bradley has had similar experiences. So has Larry Bush, a gay reporter for the *Advocate*. And so have their friends.

Other gay activists are collecting affidavits, too. If there were a war of outage, they say, its victims would include members of the elected Republican leadership in Congress, some of the leaders who pushed the McDonald Amendment, and also some of the principal supporters of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federally funded abortions. The Reagan administration would not be spared, they say, as the president has associated with closeted homosexuals before and since the scandal that cost him a couple of aides when he was governor of California. The target list includes at least one member of his White House staff and several of his earliest political supporters, now lobbyists and political consultants in Washington. One of the latter group is a master of style at parties and is known casually in the closet as "Reagan's Capote."

As for recent political history, the outage searchlight seems to be hovering over Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the famous men who helped him find subversives. Gay activists and historians are collecting rumors and affidavits on those leaders, hoping to be able to prove soon that some of them flew broomsticks to the witch-hunt. If true, the news would add a new dimension of travesty to that era.

Like the Jewish member of the Nazi Party, the homosexual in antihomosexual organizations surfaces from time to time, and the world pays little interest. In July of this year, a veteran reporter of the Liberty Lobby's *Spotlight* told a gay newspaper in Washington that he had been fired because of his homosexuality.

Joel Passinault says he violated one of the cardinal rules of the closet by allowing himself to take phone calls at the office from his lover, who was (and is) dying of cancer at Bethesda Naval Hospital. "He was frightened," says Passinault. "So I talked to him. I couldn't not talk to him under those circumstances. And somebody at the *Spotlight* overheard me say 'I love you' to him several times, and that was that. They fired me."

Anyone unfamiliar with the hidden recesses of the closet may find it astonishing that Passinault wants to go back to the *Spotlight*. He winces when he says that his best friend at the *Spotlight* wrote the most violent antihomosexual diatribes, but he takes solace from the memory of a "common ground" between them. "We shared a belief about the direction the country should be taking," he says. "We both want more spending for national defense and less for wasteful social programs."



THE CENTRAL issue of closet politics is self-denial or self-hatred. It lies beneath the charges of hypocrisy and the differences between liberals and conservatives. Perry Deane Young and the gay activists contemplating acts of outage against right-wing activists would be the first to condemn the identical acts when committed against someone else. They hate the closet passionately, but they respect almost anyone's right to choose the time and place of exit. The exception—the only sin that could induce them to violate the protective code among homosexuals—comes from Robert Bauman

and people like him, whom the activists describe as "classic, self-hating, schizophrenic, closeted gays." Bauman and his ilk do more than threaten political warfare against homosexuals. By absorbing, intensifying, and projecting antihomosexual values from positions of leadership, they give the most vivid conceivable demonstrations of self-hatred as a motivation for staying in the closet. The demonstrations threaten *all* homosexuals, among most of whom it is an article of faith that the closet is a prison justified only by prudent, reasoned fear of oppression by the straight world. Almost everyone in the closet wants to believe that it is legitimate fear that keeps him there, not self-loathing. As the outside world grows more tolerant, many have found it more difficult to tolerate Bauman-like reminders of the power of self-loathing to produce psychological contortions.

The heterosexual world remains generally oblivious to the possibility that the pro- and antihomosexual forces, both led by homosexuals, may start a war by lobbing napalm at each other. Indeed, the established order has taken little notice of stirrings about and among gays. The official position of establishment Washington is that homosexuality per se is not objectionable in public life, but that the closet is bad because it introduces a susceptibility to blackmail. This is the rationale behind the FBI's HOMEX operation, which is further predicated on the assumption that the best way to protect against possible espionage in this area is, first, to identify *all* homosexuals in public life, especially in Washington. Conveniently, the strategy justifies the existence of numerous FBI specialists, but it is probably not the most economical way of proceeding. The scarcity of blackmail-related homosexual-espionage cases and the FBI's failure to invite troubled homosexuals to make disclosures with immunity both suggest that the bureau has a surpassing negative interest in homosexuality itself.

The CIA operates under a stated public position similar to the FBI's. Recently, an agency technician challenged the sincerity of the policy by filing a lawsuit, claiming that he took the security-risk rationale at face value and decided to confess his homosexuality to his CIA boss—thereby removing leverage against him as a blackmail target—but that the CIA fired him anyway. The technician charges that the security-risk rationale is a fraud behind which the agency hides its dislike of homosexuals.

Most major organs of the American media take the official position, declaring editorially that sexual preference should not be held against a citizen in public life. Still, no television or radio network, major newspaper, or national magazine has an openly homosexual reporter among its employees—with a single exception, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which has one. The homosexuals who already work for major media organs have given evidence by their unanimous behavior that they believe they would suffer if they declared themselves. They are all deeply closeted. "My reporter friends at the *Washington Post* always shy away from me after lunch when we get near the *Post* building," says Larry Bush. "They are more uptight than any closeted people I deal with, except possibly military officers in uniform."

Most newspapers are skittish about gay stories. Columnist Dave Anderson of *The New York Times* says that in his long career the *Times* editors killed only one sports column, which was about Dave Kopay and homosexuality in professional football. Roger Wilkins, formerly of the *Times* editorial page, has said that his bosses stopped only three of his editorials, two of which were about gay issues.

By all evidence, the newspapers and other media organs would simply prefer to avoid the issue. Perhaps this has something to do with congenital machismo among journalists and writers, who frequently betray the worry that they are mere typists or observers of those who make real decisions, perform real work, and really deserve their Miller Time. More likely, the avoidance comes from the fact that heterosexuals live in their own closet, hiding from homosexuals while homosexuals hide from them. It hasn't occurred to them to inquire. Or they don't want to inquire because they know it will be a big mess. Or perhaps they sense that questions about the nature and causes of homosexuality will lead inevitably to the same questions about heterosexuality, which is unnerving.

Whatever the reason, avoidance is less becoming to journalists than to other professional groups. Its practical effect has been to ignore one of the most explosive social changes of the past decade. If the "war of outage" comes, and readers suddenly look up to find a homosexual on every street corner and a prominent official coming out of every closet, journalists will more than likely join in a panic they could have helped avoid.

VIII.

Out of the Closet



DAN BRADLEY often discussed the politics of the closet with his gay friends in Congress. They agreed that it would serve the public interest for them to declare themselves. To do so would fulfill their obligations of honesty to the voters and to themselves, and possibly would prepare the way for less fear in politics. Two liberal Democrats told Bradley they planned to "come out" if they survived the 1980 elections, but after winning they returned to the usual talk of "political suicide" and decided to postpone the announcement once again. Bradley's conclusion was that no one fights his way out of the closet for reasons of political idealism.

One Sunday afternoon, in May 1981, he ate a

sandwich in a bookstore near Dupont Circle and began walking home to watch "60 Minutes." It was then that he saw, sitting on the fender of a car, the young blond man of his dreams. "I heard trumpets blaring and angels singing," he recalls. He backtracked past the car and then turned around again, groping for a plan. Finally, he struck up a conversation with Richard,* who turned out to be the son of a Secret Service agent on the White House detail. "I fell in love for the first time," says Bradley. "That was the beginning of my downfall."

Richard was the first time Bradley had ever felt any emotion in his sex life. "There were emotions I didn't even know I had," he says. Within a few weeks, Richard was spending most of his nights at Bradley's house, and Bradley was rushing home early from the office in the hope of greeting him. Soon he was making plans to leave government service and make a life with his new lover. When his psychiatrist suggested caution, observing that Richard was a construction worker with a high school education twenty years Bradley's junior, Bradley scoffed at the difficulties. "I didn't give a damn if I had to go out and drive a taxi," he says.

As a couple, they learned to accommodate two closets instead of one. They made it a rule never to venture into Virginia, as Richard knew too many people there, and they coached each other on how to behave in a crisis. Once, in Georgetown, Richard gave the signal between clenched teeth, saying, "Dan! Keep walking," and Bradley tried to look normal as he circled the block, giving Richard enough time to talk with a girlfriend. Another time in Georgetown there was no time to separate, and Bradley used the backup plan, introducing Richard to a White House aide as a man who was hired to build a patio in Bradley's backyard. Richard tried to look like a sullen employee. Still another time, standing in line with Richard for a movie, Bradley saw Sen. Alan Cranston and his wife walk up behind them. Bradley abandoned Richard in the line without a word or sign of explanation. After chatting amiably with the Cranstons about President Reagan's threat to abolish the Legal Services Corporation, Bradley went back to the end of the line and then stealthily located Richard's seat in the theater, keeping an eye on the Cranstons to make sure they did not notice where he was sitting.

These denials took a greater toll on Bradley than any of his previous misadventures in the closet. "I wanted to tell everybody that Richard was the man I loved," he says. "I was proud of him, but the closet made me treat him like a leper. That hurt, and it hurt when he did the same thing to me."

One night a woman called Bradley at home and identified herself as Richard's mother. "How well do you know my son, Mr. Bradley?" she asked, and Bradley mumbled an answer, suppressing terror. He had visions that Secret Service agents would kick in his door. "Finally, she asked me if he was a good worker on the patio," says Bradley, "and I realized that she had bought his whole cover story."



WHILE adjusting to the new trials of life with a closeted lover, Bradley had to fulfill his duties as president of the Legal Services Corporation and also keep up the appearance of a heterosexual cover life. His friend Barbara was his most frequent date, as she had been for years, but the role was especially wearing to her because a number of friends were mounting separate, escalating campaigns directed at her and Bradley, urging each to marry the other.

One night Bradley and Barbara went to dinner with an influential Washington lawyer and his wife. The lawyer, who, like many Washingtonians, was as obtuse in personal matters as he was shrewd in political ones, decided to resolve the marriage matter by confrontation. "Barbara, I might as well tell you right in front of Dan, since you both know what's going on," he said. "I think you ought to ask him to marry *you*, and be done with it. We all know that he loves you, and he won't say no if you ask, but he's so shy that nothing will ever happen if we keep waiting for him to ask you."

This speech finally broke Barbara's loyalty. "Goddamn it!" she shouted, jumping to her feet. "Dan's never going to marry *any* woman, because he's gay! Can't you see that?"

After an unbearable silence, the lawyer's wife said, "Excuse me, I don't feel well." She walked unsteadily to the kitchen.

Barbara collapsed back into her seat, as the well-meaning lawyer stared blankly at his plate. Finally he looked up, took a breath, and said, "Well, Dan, what are you planning to do when you leave Legal Services?"

At less poignant moments, Bradley's future career was no conversational dodge. His days as president of the corporation had been numbered since Ronald Reagan's victory in the 1980 election. Inexplicably, Jimmy Carter had failed to appoint the six board members allotted to him, and the terms of the five others expired in July 1981—meaning that President Reagan could appoint all eleven board members, who would have fired Bradley summarily. But Reagan didn't appoint anyone. Like Nixon before him, he didn't bother to seize control of Legal Services because he intended to abolish it. Legal Services was the only one of the forty programs in the famous "Black Book" that was targeted for extinction rather than a budget cut.

Tentatively, Bradley planned to move to Miami, come out of the closet, and lead an openly gay life. But he came to doubt that he was ready to take Richard with him. "There were bad signs," he says. "After a few months, it began to dawn on me that

* A pseudonym.

he liked to watch all these terrible television programs. And whenever we talked about going to the movies, he always wanted to see Clint Eastwood. Things like that. I began to realize that we had nothing in common except love, and we couldn't stay in bed and be in love twenty-four hours a day."

One afternoon, Richard appeared in Bradley's office, wanting to borrow his car. He seemed uncomprehending and unapologetic when Bradley explained the trouble this visit was causing him. Not long after, Bradley told him that he would be moving to Florida alone. A long period of guilt and recrimination ensued, during which Bradley tried to explain that he still loved Richard even though he did not want to live with him forever.

Both the good and bad aspects of the love affair convinced Bradley that he would come out of the closet sooner or later. "I was determined that I would never again panic when my lover dropped by the office," he says. "And I wouldn't walk down the street with him like a fugitive criminal, always on the lookout for people who might recognize me."

By December 1981, Bradley and the poverty-law supporters in Congress had beaten back President Reagan's attempt to kill the corporation. They celebrated the victory again, even though they knew that the administration would soon oust all the incumbents. Bradley, ever conscious of legal detail, resolved to save the existing program for yet another year if he could. He did so by spending $260 million in two weeks, before the new board could take power and stop him. Bradley stayed up late many nights signing checks and cover letters, personally dropping packets into the mail for programs all over the country. When he mailed the last checks on December 15, there was not a dime left in the next year's budget. He was in Miami on New Year's Eve when the news flashed that Reagan had appointed eleven new board members and that the board had posted legal notices on Bradley's home and office doors, ordering him not to sign another check or letter. But it was too late, as Bradley would soon inform them.

Personally, he lapsed into another deep depression. Several lucrative job offers were pending, including one as president of Hialeah Race Track, but Bradley realized that every one of them required him to stay in the closet. His noble intentions dissolved into dreams. His professional desires demanded that he stay in the closet, but his insides demanded that he come out.

Bradley knew that the closet had limitless powers of deception. Numerous friends claimed to be out, only to have embarrassing circumstances make them admit that they wanted to keep the news from certain old friends, or relatives, or from strangers, or from newspapers and the general public. Bradley decided that he would have to force himself out, so he began announcing his intentions to friends who already knew he was gay. One of them, fatefully, was his old girlfriend Sally. "Richard caused my downfall," Bradley says, laughing, "but Sally was there to help it along."

This time she did so by passing the news along to her friend Phil Gailey, a reporter for *The New York Times*. Gailey, of course, wanted to write a story, and Bradley found himself trapped by his own bravado. He refused Gailey and pretended to scold Sally. However, he decided to write personal letters to twenty-five friends—fellow poverty-law yers, old teachers from Mercer, clergymen from the Baptist Church. He cried all day while writing them. Then he submitted to Gailey's interview, as a clean break, and then he went to Washington's main post office to mail the letters. He walked indecisively back and forth, but he could not bring himself to drop them through the slot. It was too irrevocable.

A chagrined Phil Gailey called a few days later to say that the story was ready but that his *Times* editors refused to use the word "gay" in headlines or the body of the text—only in direct quotation. Did Bradley mind being called a homosexual?

This struck Bradley as funny. "Phil, I *am* a homosexual," he said. "I don't care what the *Times* wants to call it."

Bradley mailed the letters, and the *Times* story ran on March 31, 1981, his last day as president of Legal Services.



INCE THEN, Bradley has become a national celebrity among gay people, traveling the country for the Gay Rights National Lobby. All the leading Democratic presidential contenders, including his old boss Reubin Askew, have asked him to talk with them about gay issues. In Miami, he addressed a large crowd on Gay Pride Day, which he calls "our Fourth of July." But what he remembers best are the countless nervous people who have come up to him after his speeches, from Oregon to Tennessee. They have talked to him about their children, their jobs, their friends who have committed suicide. Always it is the closet. Now, whenever Bradley looks over an audience, he is burdened by the thought of all the cover stories that make that audience possible—of those who tell the lies and those who believe them, or pretend to.

Romantically, he wishes he could start over at college age—the age of all his gay lovers—when he first knew he was homosexual. Now that a life's weight of denial is suddenly lifted, he has a sense of being unbalanced almost as badly as when he was carrying the weight. He hopes to adjust and to catch up, but he does not even know what is possible in gay relationships. Homosexuality, it seems, sets an exquisite table but is usually no picnic.

"But at least I don't have to lie anymore," he says. "Nobody who hasn't come out of the closet can ever know what a blessing that is." ■

DESIGNS FOR LIVING

by Posy Simmonds


On Being An Old Pet:
Here we are, my mistress & me....two dear, gray, old ladies, on whom the mantle of eldership has long rested....
...awaiting with thumping heart and tail, a Visit from the Family....
Why, Mother! How are you!
Why, hallo strangers!
They talk to her:
Oh, the traffic, mother! You wouldn't believe!
It took us over TWO hours!
So this is just a flying visit...we mustn't stay long...
Not even for dinner?
...And they talk to me.....
Aaaah...and how's my lovely old dog den? Who's a gray old lady?!
Who's a dear old dog!?
Aaaaah... I want her to kiss ME, Mommy
Aaah... her ears are so SOFT!
What a soppy old dog! She's missed you!
Who's so pretty!
Aaah...look, she wants her tummy tickled....
Grmmou... mm....
...but for the life of me, I can't figure out what I've got that she hasn't....
Sorry we can't stay longer, Mother....
It must be nice to be so busy....
STOP MAKING ME FEEL SO GUILTY, MOTHER • STOP MAKING ME FEEL SO GUILTY, MOTHER • STOP MAKING ME FEEL SO GUILTY, MOTHER •

GRANTED WISHES

THREE STORIES
by Thomas Berger

FRANK VERMILYEA had been extremely ugly even as an infant. It was routine in his family for one member or another to say, at any moment and apropos of nothing, that Bimbo the Boston terrier, if dressed in baby dress and bonnet, would be more attractive than their son or brother. And in fact this was said so often that eventually it seemed no longer to be merely one of those easily uttered absurdities but rather something capable and worthy of being realized; and therefore the three of them, his father, mother, and sister, carried it out, removing little Frank and putting Bimbo the dog in the crib, appropriately attired. Then they invited many friends to come visit, all of whom, after simpering at Bimbo, turned to the Vermilyeas and made some expression in this wise: "Little Frank has certainly become a beautiful baby! I don't mind telling you that we used to think he was awfully ugly."

"Yes, aren't we fortunate?" was the kind of thing that the grown-up Vermilyeas said in reply. Geraldine, Frank's five-year-old sister, would just snicker and hide her face in an armpit.

Meanwhile, Frank himself was concealed somewhere; perhaps a bureau drawer, of course opened a crack so that he could breathe; or on Bimbo's blanket on the floor of the broom closet (from which naturally the mops, wet & dry, had been removed, along with the dustpan and wringer-bucket); or sometimes back of a door where the newspapers were kept until the Boy Scouts called for them.

When Frank got a bit older and could move about under his own power, he chose his own places of concealment, for he was aware of how unsightly he was and he didn't want to upset anybody by forcing them to look at him. He had to admit that he had never seen anyone who even approached him in ugliness. It was amazing. He looked nothing like either parent, both of whom were so-so, and certainly did not resemble his sister, who kept gettin prettier as she grew.

The awful thing about being as ugly as Frank i that no one has the compassion for you that migh be possible with regard to some form of disability This seemed completely unfair, but there wasn much that could be done about it. Frank wer through childhood without having any friends at al While at college, however, he got a bright ide when he saw a man being led by a seeing-eye dog Of course! It was only a pity that it had taken hir so long to arrive at the obvious conclusion that h should frequent the blind.

But what he had not taken into account was tha the dog, a handsome German shepherd, might fin him repulsive! So in short order, and as usual, Fran was alone with his ugliness. However, he was a extremely intelligent individual and excelled at any thing in the scientific line, and his progress throug the undergraduate program and then on to a doc torate in nuclear physics was and remains uniqu in the records at State, consuming as it did only tw and a half years, owing to his utter lack of a socia life or even a roommate.

When Dr. Frank emerged from the university h was immediately hired, for a lucrative fee, as trou bleshooter at a nuclear-power generating plan that was notorious for its accidents. In this jo Frank usually went about in a coverall that con cealed him from head to toe, and its face mask ha only one aperture, a narrow slit across the eyes, an its window was of smoked glass, too dark to se through from the outside. Once his ugliness wa concealed, of course, no one had any objection what ever to being in Frank's presence, and he was pop ular at work as long as he stayed inside his coverall

However, once he forgot his problem, and be cause it was not the most convenient garment t wear except when you were actually inspecting the atomic pile at close range, Frank removed the head piece of the coverall and unthinkingly approached a group of his friends in the laboratory. Well, one

Thomas Berger's new novel, The Feud, *will be published next spring by Delacorte.*

voman physicist fainted dead away, and all the men overed their eyes.

Another scientist, a close friend so long as Frank vas concealed, said, "Look here, we can't put up vith this, and why should we? It's really unpleasant, rank. And you know I say that without animosity."

Frank answered sadly, turning his back on the roup. "You're right. But you'll admit it's my only law."

"Unfortunately," said his friend, "it's the kind hat outweighs most of your virtues."

"Then tell me this," asked Frank. "What about lastic surgery?"

"No," said the female physicist, who had been evived by now. "I'm afraid that wouldn't do any ood, Frank. It's not any one thing that's wrong vith your face, like a crooked nose or a big mouth r flap-ears. You're just *completely* ugly, and there's o answer for that."

The other scientists fervently agreed with this assessment, and Frank's best friend among them said, 'You've just been given a dirty deal by Fate. There's bsolutely nothing you can do about it."

Oddly enough, Frank had never really thought bout it in that way, but he could see now that what is friend said made sense. So where did that leave he situation? Did he have no choice but to do away vith himself?

But when he went home that night to his little tudio apartment he said to the ceiling, as he lay in ed, "I don't want to commit suicide, for gosh sake! am really interested in my work, for one thing. And then I enjoy all my meals, and I get a lot of leasure from my telescope and my collections." rank was an amateur astronomer and he collected oreign coins and antique political campaign buttons. "Why should I kill myself just because I'm not andsome?"

But then he thought of how much he'd like to ave some lady friends, he who thus far in life had ever had even one date, and he fell into a despondency.

"It really is lousy to be so ugly," he told himself. 'And it's ridiculous, when you think that all my roubles could be solved if I were just better looking."

At that point the bedside telephone rang.

"Hello," said Frank.

"Is this Frank?" asked the voice at the other end of the line. "That ugly guy, right?"

Frank felt like hurling down the phone. "How dare you insult me?" he cried angrily. "What business is it of yours?"

"Now, now," said the voice. "Don't ruffle your feathers. I just wanted to establish your identity. . . . Listen, Frank, I've got good news for you."

But Frank was skeptical. "I don't want to buy any more medical insurance or subscribe to a financial newsletter."

"How'd you like to be good-looking?"

This was even worse. "I don't like to be rude," said Frank, "but you've just about lost me."

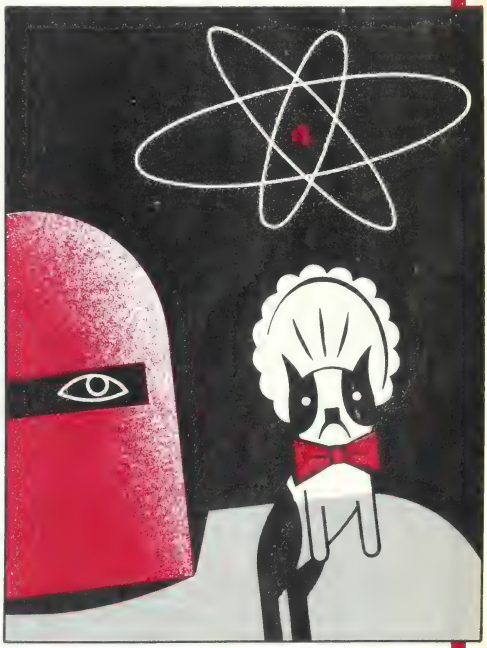
"No strings," said the voice. "Just go look in the bathroom mirror." The line went dead.

Well, it didn't cost anything to look, though Frank was sure he was making a fool of himself and had been victimized by a cruel practical joker.

. . . He was staggered to see a very handsome face staring back at him from the mirror on the medicine chest! It was himself, all right, and not a picture of a movie star that had been pasted on the glass. He had the same individual features as before: eyes, nose, chin, forehead, but the ensemble was somehow altogether different.

Aw, it was probably some kind of autohypnosis. He probably wanted so much to be good-looking that he had convinced himself. But he could not have gone to sleep if he had let it go at that.

He got dressed and went down to the lobby of his building, which unfortunately for his current purpose was too small to employ a doorman, and though he lingered in the lobby for a while none of



the other tenants came or went. He finally became too impatient to wait, and he went out and wandered along the darkened sidewalks of the city.

Before very long a man stepped out from behind a tree, stuck a pistol into Frank's belly, and demanded his money.

"Oh, God," Frank gasped. "I left my wallet back

Anders Wenngren

home! I guess you'll kill me now." It occurred to him that this would settle the problem of his appearance once and for all.

But the robber said, "No. We're going home together, the both of us, and get your funds."

So they started to walk, the man with the gun right behind Frank. When they came to a place where there was a ring of light from a streetlamp, Frank glanced back at the perpetrator, so that he might identify him for the police later on. But he soon regretted having done this, for the thug instantly ordered him to stop. Oh-oh, thought Frank, here's where I get shot for my pains.

But the robber said, "Just a minute! Let me look at you." He took Frank by the elbow and led him to a place where the light from the streetlamp was at its brightest. He stared at Frank and then he put his pistol away.

"You're really a handsome guy!" the robber said. "I can't take the money of anybody who looks as good as you do. I apologize for putting you to any trouble." He shrugged as if in shame, turned, and walked rapidly away.

Frank was so amazed that he continued to stand there. After a while a police car rolled up and stopped at the curb near him, and the beam of a powerful flashlight was directed into his eyes.

"Say, fella, c'mere," called the cop from his window, and Frank approached the car.

"Oh, *I'm* sorry, sir," the policeman said, and he lowered his light. "There are reports that a mugger is in the area, but I don't suppose he would bother anyone as fine-looking as you."

"He just went down that way," said Frank.

The cop begged his forgiveness again and drove on.

Frank had now heard the testimony of two independent witnesses, neither of whom he had ever seen before. Of course, it was just barely possible that the well-wisher who had telephoned him had hired actors to impersonate the would-be robber and the cop and perform as they did so as to encourage him to believe he had become handsome, but that seemed extremely unlikely. Who would have a motive to befriend him in such a way? Certainly not anyone in his family. At the previous holiday season his mother and sister had entreated him to stay away from them on compassionate grounds, now that his father was no longer alive. Perhaps one of his fellow scientists: for example, the man he thought of as his best friend?

Frank went home and called this individual.

"Hi, Harvey. Frank. Say, would you be involved in some scheme to make me think I am handsome?"

Harvey laughed heartily. "What a question! Certainly not, Frank. Look, as scientists we must accept the truth, even though it be uncomfortable. You're ugly: that's all there is to it. As long as you keep your mask on when you're near me, though, I couldn't care less. If you ever do take it off again in my presence, I'll throw acid at you. Bye."

Frank had never suspected that Harvey was capable of such extreme emotion: he had always seemed such a cold fish. But Frank was beginning to realize that human beings tend to have very strong feelings about how other people look, whether ugly or beautiful. He decided to put aside an investigation into who was responsible until it could be determined that something definitely had happened to him, for if the change was as remarkable as was suggested, then it was only basic scientific procedure to seek as much evidence as possible to bear upon the subject, pro or con.

Next morning, whenever Frank was stopped at a red light on the route to the nuclear plant, persons in nearby cars smiled at him, and if they were female they shouted from their windows proposals that were sometimes all but indecent. This sort of thing was altogether unprecedented in Frank's experience, and he was uncertain as to what response he should make.

But by the time he reached the plant so many overtures had been made to him that he had become a bit bolder and he was looking forward to encountering Linda, the female scientist who had only the day before fainted away on seeing how ugly he was. However, she was a bit late in arriving at work this morning, so he went ahead and suited up in his protective costume, including the mask, and when the lady did appear he forgot that his newly handsome face was concealed.

"Good morning, Frank," said she. "Please, for the love of God, don't take off your mask again today. I think a second look at you would be the end of me altogether."

"Aha," he answered through the aperture, "a surprise is in store for you, my dear lady!" And he tore away the headpiece of his suit.

The female scientist now almost fainted from delight, and when she got herself together again she said, "You're the handsomest man I have ever seen, Frank!" And she asked him how the change had come about.

He told her about the telephone call.

"But how could that have changed anything?" she asked incredulously. "Unless you are saying that the person on the phone was God?"

"Golly, Linda, I don't know what to say," answered Frank. "I have always thought of myself as an atheistic scientist."

She frowned and made a funny sort of mouth. "The thing that bothers me," she said, "is why would God use the telephone? Why would He have to?"

But the person Frank married was Madeleine Swan, the multimillionaire businesswoman, who picked him up in a health-food store. He gave up his career and stayed home all day, watching television and taking baths. Sometimes he missed his former life and its mental demands, but not often. He enjoyed being just another pretty face.

JANICE BANNING, though

uite attractive physically, had a lackluster social
anner, which she could do nothing about despite
renuous efforts. For example, she took up the
aising of houseplants and turned out to be very
uccessful at it, but though this had become a pop-
lar hobby, claiming hundreds of thousands of
nthusiasts, Janice never encountered a one of them.
nstead she was always meeting people who, when
e sought to strike up a conversation by mention-
g her *Fica benjamina* or asking for their solution
the mite problem, groaned and said in reply,
Gee, is that ever *boring*! Have a heart, Janice!" Or
ords to that effect.

She had enough sense not to try to interest peo-
le in low-sodium diets, therapies that involved the
aying on of hands, and film criticism, but she saw
o reason why wine tasting should not be of interest
o at least the members of a wine club, and she
herefore read a lot about the subject and then
oined an organization of oenophiles who met once
month to taste various vintages and compare
otes. From her research Janice knew the right way
o approach the wine for this sort of thing, and she
new the right things to say, for there is a vocabu-
ary of precise terms that apply to serious tasting,
nd she was aware that unless she used it she would
eserve to be spurned by the other members.

However, Janice had the ill luck to have joined
group that was, at least in its serious devotion to
vine, altogether bogus, being in truth a collection of
rypto-alcoholics whose object in joining together
vas merely to get drunk in the company of kindred
ouls. Therefore when Janice began to speak of
excess tannin," "volatile acidity," and "an elegant
ıose," the other members of the club responded
vith such complaints as, "God is that ever *dull*!
Come on, Janice, let's get bombed." Etc. It was
lear that she still had not found the secret to pop-
ılarity.

But neither was she discouraged as yet. She was
oo clever to suppose that reading a lot of current
ooks would get her anywhere socially. But she did
ıave the bright idea that learning how to play pool
night win her some friends, and she bought a pro-
essional-sized table and had it delivered to her
ıpartment. The only room that was large enough
o hold the table and still offer sufficient space for
he players to manipulate their sticks was the living
oom, once it had been emptied of all other fur-
ıiture.

Before inviting anyone else to come and play,
Janice read the books of such eminent billiards
champions as Willie Mosconi and Minnesota Fats,
and she practiced for many weeks until playing
ight ball against herself she could regularly run
he table.

But when she began to have guests in to play pool
hey could seldom maintain their interest through-
out even the first game. A typical comment was: "You're too good, Janice! That makes it very *boring* to play against you. All we can do is stand there helplessly and watch you sink every ball. There's no fun in that." And pretty soon she didn't know anyone who would accept her invitations.

O.K., she had learned her lesson! She gave the pool table to a boys' club, and she bought herself a tennis racket, a very short, pleated white skirt, and a pair of ruffled panties, and she loitered near the local public courts, her fine long legs, her best feature, on display, until a handsome young man invited her to play a set with him. She felt safe in accepting, for she knew nothing at all of tennis and there was absolutely no possibility that she could drive him away by being the superior player.

But after only a short time Ralph, the young man, said, "I'm sorry, Janice, it's really no fun at all to play with somebody who hasn't any experience of the game. I'm sure you mean well, but think of how boring it is for me never to have a ball returned."

So Janice had failed once again. By now she felt thoroughly cursed: no matter what idea she had, however reasonable, it wouldn't work. She was destined always to be too good at what she took up, or too bad, and in consequence, whichever, she would never have any friends at all.

Now, if you have no friends it is still possible to have a nice life, but you need lots of money, with which you can buy clothes and travel to fascinating places and be served by people who are necessarily gracious, and the rarest thing in the world if you are rich would be to hear anyone say you are boring



—unless of course they have absolutely no hope of profiting by your association or are simply perverts of some sort.

But Janice, who was a physiotherapist at a municipal hospital, had little hope of getting her hands on enough money to make her rich. So all she could do was shrug, roll her eyes at the ceiling, groan hopelessly, and say, "Gosh, if I only had a lot of money!"

When she came home from work next evening and looked into her mailbox, she found a flyer for a new supermarket, put there illegally without a stamp; a dunning letter from a charity, in which her name was ludicrously misspelled; a mail-order cat-

alogue from a firm that sold power tools; and a cashier's check for $10 million. Of course at first she assumed that the check had been sent in jest and, after smirking, was about to tear it up when she reflected that, having no friends, she was unlikely to be the target of jokes: people simply did not pull them on strangers.

Therefore next morning she went to a branch of the bank that issued the check. "Oh, that's good as gold, all right," said the teller to whom she presented it. He conducted her to the office of the branch manager, who was very obsequious, so there could be no doubt that the check was real.

Janice put the bulk of the sum with a financial manager, who proceeded to increase it enormously through shrewd investments, and in no time she was one of the richest women in her part of the country and could quit her job and do anything she wanted with her life.

But before she had spent a cent, hordes of people began to apply for her friendship, and the remarkable thing was that most of them had a great deal of money themselves, as much as or even more than Janice. That is to say, the expected fortune hunter was notably absent. Her new friends certainly didn't need her financial help. There was no getting away from accepting the fact that they found her well worth knowing for herself alone, insisting on entertaining her lavishly, even refusing, until she was at the point of being offended, to let her reciprocate, and when she was finally permitted to hold a dinner party at her new mansion, the guests brought housewarming gifts such as solid-gold teacups, real teardrop diamonds for the chandelier, and original canvases from the Venetian High Renaissance.

Before long Janice had marriage proposals from the bachelor governor of a Midwestern state, a vintage motion-picture mogul, and several young leaders of industry. But she spurned them all for the moment. She enjoyed being in the world of money and power, but she concealed from her new friends her discreet practice of slipping out from time to time, dressed modestly and unaccompanied, for a few sets of tennis at the public courts, on which occasions she played well enough to hold her own with anybody. Or she dropped in at a unisex pool parlor, where she played badly, or perhaps loitered at the garden center, where she found all sorts of people who were interested in plants, or at a wine shop, where she was asked her opinions of various bottles. And in all these places Janice was now extraordinarily popular. Certainly the men were wild about her, and even the women thought she was an intriguing person, and nobody among them suspected she had a dollar.

But after charming all these people Janice found that she was terribly bored with them. They had served their purpose once they submitted to her. She certainly had no reason to feel beholden to them: what had they done for her when she needed friends? Therefore one day they saw her no more. She re turned to the glittering realm to which she had been elevated by the granting of her wish. She only re gretted that she had not asked sooner!

CHARLIE BOLGER was th "super," which is to say, janitor of a large apart ment building in the middle of the city. He had ha this job since coming home from the war, and h hated it, and the tenants he served, more every year He spent most of his days sitting in an old over stuffed chair, down in the rent-free one-room ground floor apartment that the management used as an ex cuse to pay him very little in wages, and what h did when he sat there, though a working televisio set was just across the room, was nurse his hatre of the people who lived in the building that ros above him.

He was fond of pointing out to himself—he ha never had many friends—that you didn't know th human race until you served them as a menial an were called to unclog their drains and unlock thei brats from the bathroom and clean up after thei wives committed suicide (which happened once i his building) and shuffle your feet while they fumble for a stingy tip and go to the door of every apart ment at the appropriate time and wish the occupan thereof a Merry Xmas and take the niggardly en velope offered in response.

Charlie had remained a bachelor, because in his earlier years the occasional professional supplied al he needed of femininity. He had always disliked talking to women, believing them, however pleasant they appeared, to be secretly critical of him. Finally the day came when he found himself totally devoid o even the feeble physical need the other sex had sometimes stirred in him, and from then on his only association with the human race was as flunky t master or mistress, and he had hundreds of those.

But Charlie's hatred might well have remained passive, impotent, and routine in a city full of such types had he not, apparently by chance, discovered a device with which to express it effectively, even devastatingly, and incur no personal risk whatever This discovery was preceded (one evening after an especially obnoxious day in which a faulty dryer in the laundry room had burned up a load of clothing belonging to a woman who was peevish and importunate in the best of times) by Charlie's uttering a sequence of oaths, followed by a fervent wish that he had some clean, quiet, secret means by which, with impunity, he could rid the world of persons who annoyed him.

It was the next morning, while wrestling the garbage cans out to the sidewalk in preparation for the visit of the sanitation truck—single-handedly: his wretched helper had once again called in sick—that at the top of a lidless container Charlie found his

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weapon, a red-and-blue plastic toy pistol, a so-called Galaxy Disintegrator modeled after one brandished by the hero in a blockbuster science-fiction movie. This had obviously been discarded by one of the innumerable spoiled children who lived in the building. It was probably not even out of order: the kid had simply been bored. Charlie seized it by the butt, which was molded of flimsy, almost weightless plastic, and probed the wedge-shaped trigger, with its visible spring. No doubt it made a clicking sound when "fired."

He had not been especially childish even as a little boy, and whatever playfulness he had known had long since been exhausted, yet now, almost lightheartedly, Charlie raised the toy and pointed it at the approaching mailman, a malicious individual who loved to load building supers with armloads of packages too large for the postal boxes.

At the moment this worthy was already extending toward Charlie a document to be signed—perhaps a registered letter containing a subpoena for one of the tenants, perhaps for a man who was delinquent with his child-support payments. You could imagine his gratitude to the super for accepting the envelope.

"Hi, Charlie," cried the mailman, making his habitual derisive grin and, if precedent were to be followed, preparing one of his insulting wisecracks, e.g., 'Still working on your first million?"

"So long, sucker," said Charlie. He pulled the trigger of the toy weapon, which produced the expected clicking sound, like that made by the tongue against the roof of the mouth, and the mailman instantly disappeared, without even the proverbial puff of smoke!

Charlie was badly frightened, not because he believed for a moment that he had actually caused the postman to disintegrate into particles too small to be detected by the eye, but rather because he suspected that his mind had cracked, that he had suffered a hallucination. For he had always been a very literal man, with no imagination and with no respect for anyone who had one.

So now he was really worried about his sanity, and he even went so far as to make an emergency appointment with the psychiatrist who occupied one of the ground-floor offices in the apartment building.

"Well, well, uh, Charlie, isn't it?" said this practitioner when the super was seated before his desk. "Before we get down to business, I'd like to point out that the lobby could use a good mopping."

Charlie told this doctor, whose name was Hilfer, about the remarkable fantasy he had suffered.

Dr. Hilfer asked: "Has this mailman turned up since?"

"No, sir. But then he's not due again till tomorrow morning."

Hilfer narrowed his eyes. "You're saying you murdered him, aren't you, Charlie?" At the super's gasping attempts to protest, the doctor raised a hand. "No, no. We're not afraid to face the truth here. You did well in coming immediately to me. You'll never spend a night in jail, I'll promise you that." He rose, finished with Charlie until the next appointment.

Charlie asked him to specify his fee. When Dr. Hilfer said that, because of the courtesy discount extended to employees of the building, it was only $100 per visit, Charlie pulled out the Space Disintegrator and made the psychiatrist vanish.

With this disappearance of another person at whom he had pointed the toy weapon, the super began to think that perhaps he was not imagining things, that maybe the Disintegrator *was* an efficacious means of getting rid of human beings without any attendant problems, not even the least destruction of property.

He tried it next on a boy of twelve, an exceptionally obnoxious youth in a building full of such, and the Doberman that the lad allowed, even encouraged, to disregard the law against soiling the sidewalks. *Click-click*, another problem was removed. But Charlie was not a cruel man; the kid had parents by whom he would have been missed. The super therefore considerately erased (as he had come to call it) Mr. and Mrs. Hochman as well.



And also, in a development not related to the foregoing, all persons who lived on the south cor-

ridor of the fourth floor were caused to disappear, for one or more of them persistently fouled the floor there with a dark, viscous liquid very like motor oil and also, sometimes, a very fine gravel. And soon to vanish was a wealthy man who lived in one of the penthouses and yet always tipped Charlie as though he resided in a studio apartment.

During the next few days Charlie also erased four airline stewardesses who shared an apartment. They were old offenders against the plumbing; no sink or washstand would long run free if that hairy quartet were allowed access to it. And he expunged a pair of handsome men who shared one-bedroom quarters and had never, in four years, been seen to admit a female person onto their premises: Charlie had never subscribed to the principle of live and let. And the following persons were never seen again after he pointed the Disintegrator at them: his feckless assistant, who though twenty years younger always allowed Charlie to do the dirtier and heavier tasks; the morning doorman, who believed that his uniform made him socially superior to a super in dark-green denim; a passing stranger who spat upon the sidewalk; the heavy, sour man who had replaced the mail carrier who had been Charlie's first prey; and a very fat woman who was so tasteless as to cram herself into designer jeans and a snug T-shirt.

At this point he ceased to keep a tally on his victims—if they could be so designated, though there was no evidence that they suffered a split second of pain. The Disintegrator seemed simply to return them to the nothingness from which they had originally come as newborn infants. This would not seem to be murder. Charlie supposed that there wasn't even a law against it, because it was unprecedented. But surely there would be one once it was known to be happening. Therefore only trouble could come from anybody's learning about the Disintegrator.

Fortunately the plastic pistol would not be difficult either to conceal or to justify having if it were detected. A super routinely collected lost toys or saw that the sanitation department took away the discarded ones. But of course there could never be any reason why the Disintegrator would be identified for what it was. Only those who had been erased by it would be privy to its extraordinary power—and perhaps not even them, were they somehow brought back from the void. Most of the persons at whom Charlie had pointed it had not been looking his way at the time. Those who had been, like the first mailman, would have seen nothing but the red plastic muzzle, from which came no slug or visible emanation before its target vanished utterly.

There had never been anything of this sort in the history of man, and Charlie was aware that he could have used the Disintegrator to rule the world! He might well have set out to do that had he been younger, but now his digestion was gone and his lower back sometimes ached so much he couldn't get to sleep at night, and he really did not yearn for positive power. Just getting rid of people who annoyed him was a great advantage, and he asked for nothing more than peace in his declining years.

However, a strange state of affairs had come into being. Now that Charlie could erase those who bothered him, there were more of them all the time. Whereas when he had been helpless against them relatively few persons had seriously bothered him on any given day, now, when he had the means to rub out anyone who offended him, such individuals appeared in great numbers wherever he went. At the delicatessen, for example, while waiting in line for a brisket on rye, mustard only, the super was jostled savagely, and at least one other customer unfairly jumped his proper place in line, and when Charlie finally reached the counterman he was insulted by him for being too slow in giving the order (being momentarily speechless with indignation). Really the only way to deal with this situation was to erase everybody in the deli—a job that, amazingly, took only a few pulls of the trigger: the Disintegrator could handle any number of persons who were in line with its muzzle. Charlie was soon to test its efficacy on a line before the ticket window at the ballpark, taking out twenty-three persons with one squeeze. Apparently it was like an X ray, going straight through living tissue but having no effect on inorganic matter.

Before many days had passed, the effects of Charlie's erasures began to be evident. Fewer and fewer people were to be seen in the building, and the survivors began to wonder audibly what had happened to the missing tenants. Sometimes they unwittingly asked the only man who could have explained: "Hey, Charlie, this place is beginning to look deserted, don't you think?" Or, "What's become of everybody, Charlie?"

At first the super would cast doubt on their powers of observation. "Take it from me, there's more people around here every day. You just missed a big crowd." Next, when the reduction in population had become too drastic to ignore, Charlie would say something like: "Oh, everybody gets out of here on weekends nowadays." And if the response was "But Charlie, today's Wednesday," he might answer: "They stretch it to the breaking point, don't they?" and shake his head over the decadence of the typical contemporary jobholder. Finally, when nothing he could dream up would satisfy the inquirer, Charlie would shrug and reach for the Disintegrator, and so went, one by one, or sometimes little group by group, the remaining tenants, and soon the entire building was devoid of humanity except for Charlie himself.

Now, certainly, the people who had lived there had relatives and friends who missed them, and many individuals came to the building in search of the whereabouts of the former tenants, including representatives of the large real-estate firm that owned the apartment house. Charlie erased all these

ıvestigators, and then went downtown to the main ffice of the firm, his employers, and caused everyne there to disappear.

Charlie continued in this fashion for several ıonths, always finding new uses for the Disintegraır. For example, he was aware that even with all ıs power he was still not desirable to the kind of omen, namely young and pretty ones, who now ad begun to attract him. He might spot some ıockout accompanied by a man and erase the latr, but the girl even so would see no reason why ıe should take Charlie as replacement for her vanhed companion. But one day the super got the ea of replacing *all* the other males in the city who ere younger and/or better looking than he, and he t about making wholesale erasures with his Disingrator.

This took a few weeks, despite the effectiveness his device, for there were hundreds of thousands f persons he had to get rid of, but finally it was ne, and Charlie was obviously, by default, the best ate a woman could find in a city of the aged, the ıysically disabled, and the harmless mental defecves, and he could take his pick, with the exception the contrary ones who said that if *he* was all that as offered they could survive without male friendıip—naturally, he erased this sort immediately on earing that argument.

But at about this time life for Charlie began to e dissatisfying even though everything was going ıs way, for in the absence of all ablebodied and ıne men a good many of the practical affairs of ıe city were in a mess. When there was trouble at power plant it could not be corrected for months, wing to the tiny number of female electrical techcians, and Charlie soon found his own building ithout lights, air conditioning, TV, or any of the her conveniences afforded by electricity. Most resurants were closed for the same reason, added to hich was the utter absence of garbage-removal orkers. The few woman bus and taxi drivers were overworked that most of them quit their jobs, ıd with the disappearance of gas-truck drivers, staon personnel, and mechanics, the vehicles could ot run long anyway, and of course the same was ue of private cars.

Some of the deprivations did not matter that ıuch: most of the police were gone, but so were ımost all of the criminals, except for a few tough irls whom Charlie found it simple to erase when e encountered them.

Up to the time of the erasure of the men, teleision, radio, and the press had given daily attention the disappearance of so much of the city's popılation, and there were all sorts of theories as to hat and why it was happening; but after the powr failures this stopped, owing to the inability of the ıformation media to continue to function. However, the girls dated by Charlie talked of no other ubject, except the inevitable matter of the latest problem such as lack of refrigeration, so no food could be had but the canned and dehydrated stuff.

"Charlie," they would say, "have you heard this theory? That all the guys, every one, turned homosexual and went to some community in the desert where they won't have to listen to reproaches?"

"Hell with that," Charlie would growl. "Don't bother me about that!" For with all those lonely women at his disposal, he didn't have to worry about being rude.

And the fact was that he was getting pretty bored with women in general, now that he had them all to himself, and he was getting really tired of living without electricity, especially now that there weren't many places to go, and he would have liked at least to watch television, and whenever he had a date now he asked the girl why she hadn't gone in for a career in technology.

"Gee, Charlie," the young woman would say, "I could have sworn you would have found that unfeminine. Don't you prefer me as the high-fashion model I am, or anyway was until this current crisis hit the city?"

"I'd rather have my refrigerator turning out ice cubes," said Charlie. "I'd rather not have to go around my apartment carrying a candle." And in his annoyance with a situation that he had certainly brought on himself, he would erase this person. He had no patience whatever with anybody. He erased the rest of the men, the lame, the halt, and so on, for aesthetic reasons, and he got rid of more and more females because he was exasperated by their uselessness.

Finally, without being fully aware of what he had done, Charlie got rid of the last person in town, a tall redhead with green eyes and large teeth, who had made too many jokes for his taste, and then he was all alone in the vast city. A sense of his uniqueness came to him after a day or so, and having taken one of the empty cars that had been abandoned at every curb and driven from one end of town to the other without hearing or seeing anyone, Charlie reflected on his lack of foresight in using the Disintegrator so lavishly, and he understood that such a fool as he should never have had his wish granted. He then turned the muzzle of the Disintegrator on himself and pulled the trigger.

It wasn't long before people came from other places and repopulated the city and became so involved in their own affairs that the strange disappearance of the original citizenry, never explained, was forgotten except by those periodicals perennially concerned with flying saucers and the Bermuda Triangle.

Some kid found the Disintegrator where it had fallen after Charlie's disappearance, and he pointed it at his friends, a stray dog, and so on, and pressed the trigger, but aside from the clicking noise, nothing happened. He was still too young to have any really passionate wishes. ■



Naughty Old Men

Two veteran novelists who can still bounce the bedsprings.

by James Wolcott

LONG BEFORE Roland Barthes discovered tingles of *jouissance* in The Text, H. L. Mencken, on a marble stoop in Baltimore in the summer of 1888, experienced the awakening intoxications of words, scruffy words. Mencken, then a mere twig of a boy, curled up with a rock-'em, sock-'em serial entitled *The Moose Hunters*, and found himself climbing over difficult sentences toward enchantment. "If I staggered and stumbled somewhat," writes Mencken in *Happy Days*, "I nevertheless hung on, and by the Fourth of July, 1888, I had blooded my first book." Despite Mencken's phrasing, it was he and not the book whose virginity was pricked, and he later describes being drawn into "the powerful suction of beautiful letters—so strange, so thrilling, and so curiously suggestive of the later suction of amour. . . ." Sentences, Mencken recognized, are not just columns of ink marching tidily across the page but the agents of lull and seduction, with their own weight, tempo, tint, timbre, scent. Words are for wooing, and two of the best wooers in fiction today are the novelists Peter De Vries and W. M. Spackman, a pair of gents who have long since shed the peach fuzz of boyhood. (De Vries was born in 1910; Spackman, in 1905.) Not only do both writers use language with casual command, but when it comes to their favorite objects of regard—women—both seem gallantly agog. In an episode of the TV sitcom *Taxi*, a young woman tried to explain to Alex, played by Judd Hirsch, why she found his father so foxily appealing. "He loves women, Alex, I mean really *loves* them. Sometimes when I remove an earring I can see his eyes glisten with gratitude." The novels of De Vries and Spackman have something of this glistening awe.

Ken Rinciari

Peter De Vries, of course, has been taking his cuts in the batting cage for quite a spell now, turning out twenty books of fiction in the last four decades. But a writer—particularly a comic writer—who's unflamboyantly industrious and accomplished runs the risk of being taken for granted, and the release of a new De Vries has never been taken as occasion for carting out the pastries. Yet De Vries's work may very well outlast that of his noisier contemporaries. In an essay on P. G. Wodehouse, Wilfrid Sheed observed that Wodehouse's whimsical creations "have the sturdiness of Japanese No theater, while Thomas Wolfe's 'feelings' expire like a scream."

De Vries's novels aren't as neatly plotted as Wodehouse's, and his range of follies is smaller (Wodehouse was unrivaled in embellishing the antics of moonbeams and twits), but his best novels too have a well-hammered sturdiness, and may be standing long after the more fashionable funks of John Irving and Joseph Heller splinter like matchsticks. Now that Penguin has published a new batch of De Vries paperbacks (*Madder Music*, *Forever Panting*, *The Tunnel of Love*, and *Consenting Adults, or The Duchess Will Be Furious*—most priced at $3.95), it's easier to take some measure of his sturdiness, to loll about in the meadows of his amorous fancies with a lick of straw between our teeth.

One of the most telling moments in De Vries's fiction comes in his 1977 novel *Madder Music*, when his hero, Bob Swirling, finds himself doing a heap of verbal vamping beneath the blankets. Swirling, under the misapprehension that he's soon to die, embarks on an extramarital affair with a birdlike darling named Becky Tingle (who tells him, after he first caresses her baby-dove breasts, "You're making Becky Tingle"—a pun that makes him want to probe the air for an escape hatch). For Becky, nips and clinches aren't enough—sex for her has to be embroidered with honeysuckle endearments. " 'What are we doing now? What are you doing to me now? Oh, what next?' she would pant in wild inquiry. . . . " So:

> *Swirling had soon pasted together an all-purpose repertory of lyric material on which to draw: fragments of erotic poetry, vivid descriptive touches or scraps of heated dialogue from bed scenes in novels he had read, some gamy street stuff and drugstore cowboy waggeries ("Spread your legs a little, honey, you're pinching my ears.") . . . He divided her into temperate, semitropic and tropical zones, with salutes to her steaming equatorial thicket and the hot blossom nestled within. The required metaphors tumbled out of him every which way, mixed and unmixed. He felt like both a puffing athlete and a commentator giving a blow-by-blow account of his performance, and then he became still a third self, observing himself doing all this, the spectator for whom the game is played and the color broadcast.*

Not only is language the tissue and trimming of experience, but it's a costume wardrobe that allows us to climb out of our everyday roles and strut across the stage as a rakish cavalier, a wronged suitor, a lovebewitched cuckold. Critics all, De Vries's hapless heroes plunk themselves in the back row of the auditorium and blow raspberries at their own performances.

The true comedy in De Vries's novels is that his characters flit so far out of themselves that this scissoring of consciousness into Commentator, Performer, and Spectator leads to a mad, dizzying tangle. Personalities are slipped on and off like dimestore disguises. In *Madder Music*, the protagonist roams the grounds of a sanitarium in a Groucho Marx slouch, peppering the staff with puns and sallies ("That's putting Descartes before de hearse," he says to a shrink who offers him a philosophical tome on death); in *Forever Panting*, the protagonist uses his spare time to polish up his impressions, occasionally lurching about in the cellar as Boris Karloff ("His eyeballs disappearing dangerously upward into his skull, he stalked to the foot of the stairs . . ."). And in *The Tents of Wickedness*, a novel now regrettably out of print, De Vries really trots out the ventriloquial tricks, parodying the prose of (among others) Proust, Faulkner, and Dreiser as he traces the capricious life of a poetic lass named Sweetie Appleyard—"a half-daft girl with vine leaves in her hair, who hears the horns of elfland faintly blowing." With so many pretensions to imitate and mock, with so

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many voices crowding for attention, it's small wonder that De Vries's heroes often long to click off their minds and silence all this tape hiss and babble. Language is not only their trampoline, but the ceiling on which they bump their heads.

It's this acute attention to excess and inflection that makes De Vries's novels triumphs of screwy nuance. Dr. Johnson chided Shakespeare for haring after quibbles, but De Vries's quibbles are usually worth the chase. The oddest things set him off. When an imposing German in *Consenting Adults* asks the hero if he has any "hoppies," he muses: "Hoppies, hoppies. Little Tolkien-encouraged creatures that wipe their noses on rhododendron leaves and—Oh, hobbies, of course." Puns, fluffs, fumbled epigrams, wheezes of fustian, snorts of damning indignation, none of it escapes De Vries's notice, and from these faint swishes of nuance larger notions of style and paradox can be built. When the



hero of *The Tents of Wickedness* is introdueed to a haughty number named Mrs. Bickerstaffe, he registers: "She was unmistakably British. In her voice rustled the thin paper on which the air editions of the better English journals are printed, in America used for wiping eyeglasses and binding cigarettes. Perhaps the Americans saw too clearly to have vision? They lacked the touch of fog responsible for the mysticism that made English poetry great." That may not make Becky Tingle, but it certainly gives me a tickle. Now, every time I peel off the wrapper of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, I can hear Romantic poets sneezing in the mists.

As indicated in the passage on Swirling's sis-boom-bah pillow talk, linguistic and erotic connoisseurship go hand in glove in De Vries. Love and language alike sound lightly on the tongue. In De Vries's earlier novels, his suburban tomcats and kitlings chased each other like foolhardy cheats out of John O'Hara, with a curtain of discretion falling over their adulterous couplings. But in the swinging freedom of the post-*Portnoy* era, De Vries has been able to draw back the curtain and give his erotic imagination its full striding romp. In *Consenting Adults*, the action is so wild and frantic that the bedsprings come shooting out of the mattress. After more conventional boudoir gymnastics, De Vries's hero strikes acquaintance with a handful of triplets called the Peppermint Sisters, whose thumping erotic finesse scatters pigeons from the windowsill and brings down the wallpaper in a swooning wilt. "Such travels on cusp and curve and hollow, such ceaselessly ranging bliss," sighs De Vries's hero, himself swoonily awilt.

It's been said of Henry Miller's writing that when ol' Henry parted the sheets for a goaty go of it, the reader could feel the crumbs on the pillowcases, the moles on the chippie's upper lip. The lovemaking in De Vries's novels—all that choreographic slapstick—is brushed clean of this naturalistic grit. Even with their imperfections (a chipped tooth, a crooked toe), the women in De Vries seem buffed and dimpled, not so much idealized as mock-idealized. They're earth angels with a few discolored feathers. If De Vries's sexual comedies have a flaw, it's that De Vries is locked too tightly into his heroes' prowling lusts—he's so in tune with the hoofbeats of his satyrs that he never quite zeroes in on the needy, naughty appetites of the nymphs to whom they give chase.

No Geoffrey Chaucer he. But this is a small kick to make against a writer who has given us twenty spry, funny glimpses into the bulging tents of wickedness.

THE WOMEN in W. M. Spackman's novels are also mock-idealized little dreamboats. Spackman, a former Rhodes Scholar at Balliol who has taught classics at the University of Colorado and New York University, has a love of classical proportion laced with a fondness for velvet, tassels, brocade: the full trappings of privileged amour. But although much admiring fuss is made of their sculpted smoothness ("fingers tracing the elegances of that docile young back, downwards too, thumb modeling the plunge of waist into slender thigh": *A Presence with Secrets*), Spackman's fictional women are far from figures of cool, mute, decorative marble. They're sputtering fusspots—divine chatterboxes who reduce Spackman's silk-robed roués to strangled gurgles of exasperation. On a dinner date with a flustery young actress named Morgan, the set-upon protagonist of *An Armful of Warm Girl** finds himself under adoring siege:

> *She gazed at him with great misty eyes, gulping.*
>
> *So he prompted, "So now then what."*
>
> *"Well if I have to tell you," she said in a choking voice, "it's that this is the first time, in all these months I've loved you so blindingly, that you've ever once* really *treated me as if I were even nice enough to more than politely glance at," and buried her face in his shoulder, clinging. . . . She wailed, "Oh you've wounded me so! Because you really* hadn't *noticed, had you," she accused him, flinging up her head and staring at him with great wet eyes, "but tonight you've been so sweet and wonderful, only now you've made me tell you* [that I love you] *you'll change, it's all spoiled, you'll be* conscious *of it, you'll probably even start hating me for not leaving it unsaid," she ended in piteous tones.*
>
> *"I swear I—"*

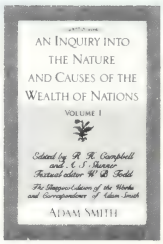
* Van Vactor and Goodheart, $5.95, paper.

His patience in a frenzied knot, Nicholas eventually bolts the table to clobber a waiter and get "the goddam menu."

As a prose stylist, Spackman doesn't have De Vries's satiric reach and formal command—his novels work in a narrow crackling frequency, as his characters swat at small irritations in their pursuit of sumptuous, enfolding ecstasies. What makes his books entertaining is not merely this mosquito hum of erotic tension but the way that Love damnable Love keeps butting its pestering head through door and portal. Just when Spackman's protagonists are ready to curl up in snoozy repose, another wet-eyed dear peeps in to set off a firecracker under their well-ordered lives. Love is everywhere, crisp and inescapable, an endless drumming in the ears. In Philip Larkin's great poem "Sad Steps," the narrator, groping back to bed after a piss, gives the moon a contemplative look-see and takes grim solace in the knowledge that the pain and vigor of youth "is for others undiminished somewhere." For Spackman's worldly gents, this romantic vigor is just another cursing nuisance—"*Yes!* and no sooner settle down for a night's decent rest in due course than in all likelihood from some next-door room there'd come a rushing and trampling, a delighted nubile screeching, and the hoarse male grunts of Edwardian desire. . . ." Could you damned kids *cut down that goddam racket*?!?—Spackman's heroes are trying to get their rest, you inconsiderate little twerps. Fending off smitten kittens frays the nerves.

Because the novels of Spackman and De Vries are comedies of sexual distress—chronicles of hedonism gone awry—they don't tap into the deeper, messier, more embattled undercurrents of eroticism. The reader bobs along on a sea of seltzer water, his nose tickled with stray fizzes of whimsy. But the winking surface isn't always the worst place to be. Although literary greatness may dwell in the D. H. Lawrence depths, those bowels of turmoil where men and women do their apache dances of dueling wills, it isn't a place most of us could live in for long—our bodies would buckle under the strain. At their most heedlessly hedonistic, these novels offer the reader a pagan holiday, an ivy-covered retreat where the roses are abundant, the wine plentiful, the women unblemished and full of sass. The mock-fruity note of benediction comes from *Consenting Adults*: "Thus they romped and lolled, slept and woke and romped again. Such sweet ease took they of one another that flocks of songbirds might have caroled them to their riots and their rests." In sterner moments, we may all want to take BB guns to those damned birds, but every now and again it's restful to hear a few serenading chirps. ■

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The Politics of Charm

by John Lahr

There's no private life in *The Noel Coward Diaries.*

ONCE, when asked how he would be remembered by future generations, Noel Coward shrewdly replied, "By my charm."

Charm was Coward's main theme both on and off the stage. "I have taken a lot of trouble with my public face," Coward said. He wanted his public to be enchanted; he wanted not simply triumph but total surrender. "Lose yourself," Coward said about acting, "and you lose your audience." Coward kept himself and his public under tight control. "You've got to control the audience," he said of killing the ripples of small laughs to get the waves. "They've got to do what I tell them."

John Lahr's Noel Coward: The Playwright *will be published this year by Avon Books.*

Charm made this tyrannical willfulness seem like good manners. "This extra politeness is not entirely real." But then nothing about Coward was entirely real, except his allegiance to his talent and to the public that kept him a "great celebrated cookie" from 1925 to his death in 1973. "Consider the public," he advised the New Wave playwrights who were anathema to him. "Treat it with tact and courtesy." Charm was the outward and visible sign of the boulevard desire to please—a desire to which Coward, with over fifty produced plays, three hundred songs, and volumes of short stories, novels, and autobiography, dedicated and finally surrendered his life.

Coward's theatrical impulse came from a sense of his persona, not a sense of life. From his first produced play, *I'll Leave It to You* (1920), to his last, *A Song at Twilight* (1966), his obsession remained his performing self. Where his stage frivolity announced a philosophical detachment, his charm broadcast a craving for affection. It was a potent mix.

The word "charming" appears in the first entry of *The Noel Coward Diaries*,* which cover his postwar years until his knighthood in 1970, and echoes like a lost soul through his day-by-day account of the life he made legendary. Churchill was "so ineffably charming, that I forgave him all his trespasses and melted into hero worship."

To Coward, charm was virtue and its own reward. After reading a debunking biography of T. E. Lawrence, Coward dismissed it in his diary in spite of its truth: "[Lawrence] was charming to me anyhow, with a charm that could only be repaid by affection and a certain arid loyalty."

The name of charm's game is omnipotence. Charm is a performance that negotiates a truce with reality, manipulating the world but keeping one's individuality well defended. "It's wonderful what a little determined charm will do," Coward confided to his diary, and he put it to the test when Vivien Leigh, staying at Coward's Swiss home in 1959, was deluged with reporters pursuing the story of her rumored break with Laurence Olivier. "I received [the press] politely, gave them a pre-lunch drink, and utterly cowed them with excessive good manners. They were too cowed to ask Vivien a single embarrassing question about the marriage."

Charm teases boundaries without overstepping them; the delicacy of the dissimulation requires constant vigilance. From the first, Coward examined his role-playing in both songs and plays. His Twenties lyrics directly expressed the notion of life as charade: "Life is nothing but a game of make believe" ("When My Ship Comes Home"); "I treat my whole existence as a game" ("Cosmopolitan Lady"). *The Young Idea* (1922) dramatized the power

* Little, Brown, $22.50.

of charm to create harmony; *The Vortex* (1924) was about the terror of losing enchantment; *Hay Fever* (1925), Coward's finest light comedy, was about being as playing a role and the charm of talent that makes monstrous egotism forgivable. Insofar as it hides pain and promotes good feeling, Coward saw charm as a kind of moral courage —an idea he staged in *Easy Virtue* (1926).

COWARD had learned early that a good offense is the best defense. He used charm to mask his insecurity and admit to his high-spirited ambition. "It is important not to let the public have a loophole to lampoon you," he told Cecil Beaton in 1930, as one phenomenon to another. Beaton recounted the conversation in his diary:

> *That, [Coward] explained, was why he studied his own "façade." Now take his voice: it was definite, harsh, rugged. He moved firmly and solidly, dressed quietly. . . . "You should appraise yourself," he went on. "Your sleeves are too tight, your voice is too high and too precise. You mustn't do it. It closes so many doors. It limits you unnecessarily. . . . I take ruthless stock of myself in the mirror before going out. A polo jumper or unfortunate tie exposes one to danger."*

Danger seems a strange word for the most famous young man of his generation to apply to the public. But there were so many things about Coward that the English might misconstrue as a bad show. He was brash and driven. He was hardworking and infuriatingly precocious. He was homosexual. He was also largely self-educated and raised "in circumstances which were liable to degenerate into refined gentility unless watched carefully." Coward watched himself like a hawk.

"On Monday I attended a gargantuan cocktail party given by the publishers in honour of my new paper-bound book," Coward wrote in his 1955 diary. "I shook hands with hundreds of people, was tirelessly charming, and made cheerful, modest little jokes." No one else could work a room with as much sensational modesty. Coward made his success as charming as his persona. Even jokes at his own expense somehow broadcast his stature. "I was incredibly unspoilt by my success," he wrote in the first volume of his autobiography, *Present Indicative*.

In public, Coward's charm worked a treat; in private his panic sometimes showed through. Dame Sybil Thorndike remembered that Coward "could play these nervous, strange people, hysterical people, which is very rare. He was absolutely wonderful. It's only people who are hysterical who can play hysterical parts. You see he could scream!" Coward was an upstart. To Edith Sitwell, whom he lampooned unmercifully in *London Calling!* (1923), he was "little Coward." He had to work hard at masking his ambitious self-involvement. Sir Henry ("Chips") Channon recounts having tea with him in 1945:

> *He was flattering (he is an arch-flatterer), insinuating, pathetic and nice. I have never liked him so much, though he talked mainly about himself. At length, after many compliments and vows of eternal friendship, he left.*

ALWAYS one step ahead of his generation, Coward was born on December 16, 1899. "Up until the actual moment when I was deposited," he wrote in his diary, "[Mum] hadn't really wanted me. The tragedy of Russell's death at the age of six and a half had broken her heart and she dreaded further maternal anxieties." Violet Coward cosseted her second boy and encouraged his ambitions, but Coward's unrelenting hunger for acceptance comes back to this primitive desire to win parental affection finally and forever. By the time he was twenty, he'd been earning applause on the stage for a decade. His coming of age coincided with the emergence of Youth as a new, demanding force in English society. Newspapers continually mulled over "the question of Youth." As one *Evening Standard* editorial of 1924 had it: "Post-War Youth won the war. . . . Youth ought to make the peace . . . but mere noise, high-spirited defiance, is no substitute for service." Coward combined a Victorian work ethic with the high jinks of the young. He was industry in cap and bells. He laid siege to the public as songwriter, actor, and playwright. He wanted to be everywhere. And because of his talent and the changing times, he largely succeeded. He *was* the young idea of Twenties—gaiety, courage, pain concealed, amusing malice. In him Youth found a symbol and a boulevard spokesman: someone equal to their elders in sophistication, yet who made their impudent disenchantment a star turn. "I was," Coward observed, "the belle of the ball."

Having worked up an irresistible persona, he turned his quick-witted, scintillating charm into dramatic legend in the Thirties, at once teasing and condoning his self-involvement. As an observer of the world at large Coward was hopeless; as a social reporter of his class and the deluxe isolation of his consciousness, he could be brilliant. With its chic dressing gowns and bitchy dressing downs, *Private Lives* (1930) winked at Coward's emotional underinvolvement and abnormal sexuality. A self-confessed "celebrity snob," in *Design for Living* (1933) Coward sported with his great success and the defiantly private, self-obsessed talentocracy of postwar England of which he was a charter member. At the end of the decade, *Present Laughter* (written 1939, produced 1943) celebrated the politics of charm, admitting the artificiality of the persona only to make its charm triumphant. "Garry Essendine is me," Coward told the BBC years later, speaking of the play's romantic comedian who dissimulates so eagerly that he has forgotten who he is.

Occasionally Coward's friends took him to task for this. "She told me that for the last three years I had

been becoming so unbearably arrogant that it's grotesque," Coward wrote, airily dismissing one heart-to-heart the next day. "The reason *Pacific 1860* is so bad is that I have no longer any touch or contact with people and events . . ." But the diary shows that the man who staged himself as Frank Gibbons, the spokesman for the ordinary patriotic English working bloke in *This Happy Breed* (1942), had no rapport with ordinary people, and, worse, no way of imagining their suffering. "There can be no doubt about it," Coward wrote the year the play was produced, "I have no real rapport with the 'workers,' in fact I actively detest them *en masse*. They grumble and strike and behave abominably." Talent set him apart from the mass. "I have at least a few months in hand before I resume singing and acting and showing off and being a fascinating public legend," he wrote in 1954, with only half his tongue in cheek.

"People," Coward noted in 1926, when he was recuperating from a nervous collapse, "were the danger. People were greedy and predatory and if you gave them the chance they would steal unscrupulously the heart and soul of you without really wanting to or even meaning to. From now on there was going to be very little vitality spilled unnecessarily." Charm was Coward's camouflage that hardened into armor. Onstage, it excused private inadequacies by making them delightful; offstage, it was a form of public reticence that also straight-armed public scrutiny. Charm kept the public engaged and the performer aloof.

Present Laughter makes light of this transformation. To elude his fans, Essendine, polite to the end, tiptoes out of his house at the finale, leaving the fans inside. Coward ends all his major comedies (*Hay Fever*, *Private Lives*, *Blithe Spirit*) with the image of characters tiptoeing away from chaos. The stage pictures give shape to the mission of his laughter: frivolity aspires not so much to evade the issue as to escape it. But, as the diaries show, Coward never did. The spellbinder is also trapped by the spell he casts.

On rereading his diaries, Coward thought his life "one long extravaganza," like living inside a Fabergé egg. "It's no use imagining that I can escape the consequence of my own fame," Coward wrote. "I am bound to be set on and exploited by people wherever I go." But he never tried to abandon fame. "I have had screaming rave notices and the news has flashed round the world," he wrote of his Las Vegas cabaret debut in 1955. "I am told continually, verbally and in print, that I am the greatest attraction that Las Vegas has ever had and that I am the greatest performer in the world, etc., etc. It is all very, very exciting." Attention was his fix; and the rich and famous confirmed and extended the charm that sustained the illusion of omnipotence.

COWARD socialized with no one but the rich and famous; he traveled nowhere except by first class. (August 29, 1961: "The Mellons sent their private jet plane for us and we were whisked to Osterville on Cape Cod . . . where we had lunch with the President and Mrs. Kennedy, both of whom were charming.") Coward spent the postwar years shuttling between the watering holes of Los Angeles, New York, the Riviera, Jamaica, and Switzerland. And even when he followed his secret heart to Marrakesh, he still longed for the Ritz. "To hell with local colour. I'd go mad if I spent one night in the ever so fascinating native quarter and that's that."

Coward imposed as sharp and disarming a sense of form on his life as he did on his art. He required his life, as well as his recounting of it, to have an enchanting symmetry. As a result, the diaries are remarkable for their lack of observation and detail about the rarefied world he inhabited. The rough edges go unseen and the raw words go mostly unreported, a formula in keeping with Coward's faith in niceness, which he associated with good taste. "Taste," he said, "can be vulgar but it must never be embarrassing." Occasionally, as when the Beatles refused to meet the Master because of something he'd been quoted as saying about them in the press, Coward let his guard drop:

> *I thought this graceless in the extreme, but decided to play it with firmness and dignity. I asked Wendy* [the publicist] *to go and fetch one of them and she finally reappeared with Paul McCartney and I explained gently but firmly that one did* not *pay much attention to the statements of newspaper reporters. . . . I sent messages of congratulation to his colleagues, although the message I would have liked to send them was that they were bad-mannered little shits.*

In recording his rigorous work routine, his social whirl, and the endless series of successful public engagements, Coward's diary betrays a man obsessed with being distracted from himself. Inevitably, this led to the attenuation of his spirit and his talent, something that Coward feared as early as 1946, when he reminds himself in his diary: "If I forget these feelings [about the war] or allow them to be obscured because they are uncomfortable, I shall be lost." In the end, shunning change and seeking comfort, he was lost.

In postwar England, where priorities were being drastically overhauled, Coward was flummoxed. Frivolity, which is skepticism on holiday, had little to say to a society obsessed with rebuilding itself. Coward's late work aggressively trivialized the major aesthetic and social shifts of his day. *Nude with Violin* (1956) treated modern art as just a con. At a time when England was divesting herself of her colonial interests, Coward's *South Sea Bubble* (1956) was an imperialist fantasy in which a colony eschews independence and reform. "Believe me," says the island potentate, "we are too young yet for such brave experiments. Too young and gay and irresponsible to be about to do without our Nanny." And on the issue of democracy, *Rel-*

ative Values (1951) jokes staunchly for the status quo ante. "I drink," says the butler Crestwell, raising his glass at the finale, "to the final inglorious disintegration of the most unlikely dream that ever troubled the foolish heart of man—Social Equality." Coward knew how to be popular, but he was no longer pertinent. "I have never felt the necessity of being 'with it,'" he said, with a characteristic smug twinkle. "I'm all for staying in my place."

COWARD'S eleven postwar plays brought home the bacon, but no glory. He was booed onstage after the opening of his musical *Ace of Clubs* (1950). The New Wave wanted disenchantment; Coward's charm cultivated reassurance and enchantment, which served the status quo. In the class war being waged, Coward fought with the old guard. The tuxedo and the teacup were his coat of arms. "[I] cannot understand," he wrote in 1957, "why the younger generation, instead of knocking at the door, should bash the fuck out of it." But except when Coward took the stage himself as a cabaret turn, his charm was losing its potency. "Oh dear," he wrote in his diary in 1950, "I really seem quite unable to please." His instinct was for retreat. As the title song from *Sail Away* (1961) counseled:

When the storm clouds are riding
Through a winter sky
Sail away—sail away

In 1956, Coward went into tax exile, first to Bermuda. In 1959 he shifted base to Switzerland. His plays too moved away from contemporary English life. He was drawn primarily to period musicals and romantic comedies that looked to a past whose manners and meanings he could fathom and stage. As Coward's idea of England ossified, so did his antic spirit. Bitterness seeped into his diaries, if not into his plays. "Our history except for stupid, squalid, social scandals is over," he wrote in 1963. "I despise the young, who see no quality in our great past and who spit, with phoney Left-Wing disdain, on all that we, as a race, have contributed to the living world."

Coward's best postwar play, *Waiting in the Wings* (1960), used the metaphor of an old-age home for former music-hall stars to show off the gallantry of the performers' charm while exploring their fear of losing it. The notion of stars being forgotten, of performers' "magic" no longer being able to protect them from the vagaries of life, touched something deep in Coward. But this shrewd and moving play, like almost all of his postwar work, was dismissed by the critics.

In his last West End offering, *Suite in Three Keys* (1966), three one-acts, of which *A Song at Twilight* was the best, Coward returned to the theme of charm and dissimulation, which for the young man promised harmony and for the old man had created a wasteland. Coward played Hugo Latymer, who, like himself, had sacrificed his life for his reputation. "Latymer," wrote one critic, "is Garry Essendine thirty soul-sapping years on." Coward's makeup suggested a connection with Somerset Maugham, which put the public off the scent of *A Song at Twilight*'s essentially autobiographical nature.

In the play, the well-known writer is threatened with being exposed as a homosexual. Letters from him have come into the hands of a woman who was ill treated by Latymer in an early affair. "Your book," says Carlotta, speaking of Latymer's autobiography, "may have been an assessment of the outward experience of your life, but I cannot feel that you were entirely honest about your inner one." Later she takes him to task for his lack of moral courage and his dishonesty, in words for which there is no comeback. "You might have been a greater writer instead of a merely successful one," she says, voicing Coward's autumnal thoughts, "and you also might have been far happier." Latymer survives with his public image intact, but the play ends in a tableau of isolation and regret. *A Song at*

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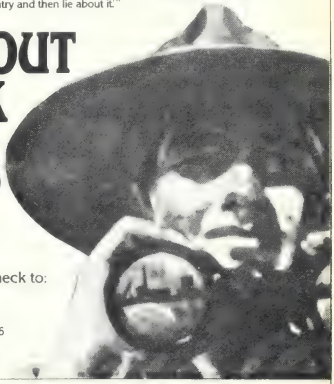
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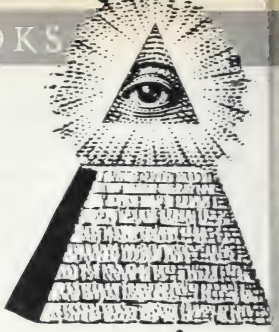
Portions of this book first appeared in *Harper's*



Twilight came as close as Coward ever could to admitting the price he'd had to pay for his legendary life.

COWARD, like Latymer, had steadfastly dodged the issue of homosexuality in his writing. "Any sexual activities when overstated are tasteless," he wrote in his diary. When he fell in love, he could only muster a coy, inadequate sentiment: "I fear that Old Black Magic has reared itself up again." As he once admitted in poetry, Coward was no good at love. Unable to sustain a love relationship, his only enduring commitment was to the public. He had posed as a romantic comedian and turned his fantasy of heterosexuality into showbiz legend. Instead of being explorations of consciousness, the majority of his plays remain explorations of his self-consciousness. Popularity only intensified the masquerade. His burnished charm won him a wide following but trapped him into a perpetual star performance. He rationalized this alienation as duty. "If you're a star, you have to behave like one," he said. "The public is very demanding. They have a right to be."

The man's diary, like his career, ends on a note of smug triumph. Coward referred to the revival of his stock as a playwright in the mid-Sixties as "Dad's Renaissance." And in his last diary entry (December 31, 1969), he described attending the National Film Theatre, which was presenting a season of his films; a birthday party thrown by the BBC in his honor; and then a birthday lunch given by the Queen Mother, at which the Queen asked Coward if he'd accept a knighthood. "Apart from all this," he wrote, "my seventieth birthday was uneventful." He died three years later, on March 26, 1973. His public façade remains rock solid. Having dedicated his life to a glamorous success, Coward left no hint of his impoverishment. For that, as with all professional charmers, the public must read between the lines. ■



Thinking Like an Economist

by Mark Lilla

Why economists don't beat their wives—or understand the economy.

ECONOMICS students have a difficult time explaining just what it is they do. On summer vacations and holidays, when their relatives and friends first learn they are studying economics, budding economists are inevitably milked for financial advice: will the stock market turn up in the next quarter? Is a money-market fund a safe place for an IRA? Most of us who have suffered this ordeal have probably faked our way through it without detection, tossing out wisdom on "short-term and long-term rates," "getting off margin," "futures," and "AAA bonds," while hoping that no one in the room suspected our utter ignorance and praying we wouldn't cost anyone any money.

Perhaps the more honest among us would admit that economics students learn virtually nothing practical about business, and would try to explain just what does happen in an economics class. Paper is pulled out, perpendicular axes are drawn, and soon various curves, dotted lines, and letters appear; explanations of "long-run average cost," "utility," "equilibrium price," "elasticity," and "marginal rates of substitution" soon follow. When the student finally looks up from the page, now blackened with scribblings, he meets stares of bewildered disappointment, especially from his parents. *For this we're paying thousands every year? How will he ever get a job talking like that?*

Of course, most students who elect to study economic theory originally did so out of some vague interest in the general state of the economy or economic problems in business, law, or politics. For them, the first few weeks of class can be disturbing because the professor does not mention the actual economy much; instead, he constructs a mathematical "model" of the economy based on the seemingly harmless assumption that people know what they want and act so as to "maximize" their satisfaction. Students with a general interest in economics will be baffled by this detour, and someone just out of psychology class might wonder whether an answer to one of the mysteries of life—do people know what they want?—can simply be assumed. But economics professors are very good at cajoling and convincing the recalcitrant that "theories are just sets of working hypotheses," and that this one should be tested to see if it works. *C'mon, try it. What are you afraid of?*

Most students succumb to such coaxing, and for good reason—the

Mark Lilla is executive editor of the Public Interest.

deductive purity of economic theory gives the world a great deal of symmetry, order, even beauty. Besides, it's fun. By making a few basic assumptions about "economizing"—how people choose—economic theory is able to move from quite simple models of how markets operate to elaborate models of why people get married, how cities develop, and why the arms race continues. And by making the ways of the world so comprehensible, these models make it easy for students to conclude confidently as to how taxes should be assessed, how pollution should be controlled, why the minimum wage is a bad idea, even how endangered species should be managed. To the twenty-year-old confused by all the intellectual problems college has presented, this is very powerful stuff. The more problematic the world looks, the more attractive the study of economic theory becomes.

So from a broad interest in economics or politics, more and more students are drawn into *being* economists and seeing everything in the world through an economic lens. The order that results gives them a life of few paradoxes, no mysteries, and virtually no contradictions. So economists, if generally a rather dull lot, are tremendously friendly, happy people.

Some of my best friends happen to be economists, I meet many more in my work, and I really don't know one who is deeply plagued by severe metaphysical doubts (except a few Marxists, who parlay theirs into successful careers). The ones I know have happy homes and lots of kids, they sleep well, and, like those in the hard sciences, they tend to be more traditionally religious than the average academic. Economists don't beat their wives (or husbands), English professors do.

So the world looks to economists to explain the economy, while they think they can explain the whole world. Their theoretical pretensions have also led to the most inexplicable (to economists) paradox of all: that economists are awfully good at explaining everything in the world *except* the economy.

MANCUR OLSON wants very much to understand the sorry state of Western economies. But he also wants to construct a theory that explains how the world works, as is clear from the title of his new book, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities.** That he thinks he may have succeeded is indicated by his reference to the grand edifice that is Economic Theory: ". . . the centuries of work on the great cathedral must continue. The quarreling masons have not been working on this part of the cathedral from an agreed design, but I believe that they have hewed out of the granite most of the building blocks that are needed." (Economists talk like that.)

The question Olson examines is surely the most important to modern Western economies and the most embarrassing to professional economists: why is there "stagflation," that inexplicable combination of low growth, moderate-to-high inflation and unemployment, and eroding investment that has plagued so many developed nations over the past ten to fifteen years? And why have some nations, most conspicuously Japan and West Germany, suffered less severely from the problem?

Economists are deeply baffled, Olson admits, because there is simply no compelling theoretical explanation of extended stagflation that does not respond to changes in economic policy.

What is to be done? Recently, some critics of the profession, such as Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol (in *The Crisis in Economic Theory*), have suggested that the answer may lie outside the narrow bounds of economic theory as it is defined and practiced today, and that economists should look instead to the politics, sociology, culture, and history of capitalism. (Marxist economists used to argue this point, but now they talk like ordinary economists, only worse.) But most economists, in the grip of what people who use French phrases like to call a *déformation professionelle*, still believe that the problem has been too *little* theory, not too much, and hope that ever more complicated mathematical models will eventually produce an answer. Anything worth doing is worth overdoing, right?

Olson holds a peculiar combination of both views. On the one hand, he sees that contemporary economic theory is at a loss to explain recent stagflation, and he senses that Western economies have become stalled for political and cultural reasons. On the other hand, he sincerely believes that politics and culture can best—perhaps *only*—be understood through economic analysis.

Specifically, he believes that economies begin to stagnate when a large number of independent economic interest groups form to seek their own short-term gain by preventing the operation of a free market, thus harming the national economy in the long term by making it highly inefficient. Every economy has the potential to grow, every country is a Japan just waiting to happen, except that these groups stand in the way of what economists call "mutually advantageous trades" among individuals. Such groups, sometimes called "distributional coalitions" or "encompassing organizations" by Olson, will use every opportunity available to fix wages or prices, raise tariffs, or increase taxes, thereby limiting economic choice and reducing growth, heating up inflation, and increasing unemployment. And the longer these groups exist, the more powerful they become.

The most novel of the conclusions Olson draws is that some economies do better than others because their economic groups are younger and less powerful, usually due to recent wars or revolutions. Countries with a long history of "unchanged boundaries," by contrast, will have stronger, older, and more powerful economic interest groups, and therefore slower growth, because they will seek to equalize incomes and will bog down the economy by preventing the intro-

* Yale University Press, $14.95.

duction of new technologies and industries and by increasing regulation.

How Olson reaches these conclusions is as important as what they are. To understand his method, one must go back to his best-known book, *The Logic of Collective Action*. Published in 1965, it has by now become a small classic in the "economic theory of groups." This branch of economic theory attempts to move directly from an understanding of individual economic choice to an understanding of the dynamics of the behavior of groups —for instance, unions, political parties, and lobbying organizations— and of why people join them, how they carry out collective action, and how they provide "collective goods" (such as parks, which are shared by all members of a group).

The Logic of Collective Action was an economist's tour de force —Olson had constructed a hypothetical model of how individuals in groups behave and offered a few "applications" of his theory to specific problems, *without first looking at any specific group! (Look, Ma, no hands!)* For example, he demonstrated in theory what union officials have always known in practice—that if a business is not a "closed shop," forcing all the workers to join the union, none will join.

IT SHOULD come as no surprise that Olson begins his new book not by studying the particular countries whose differing growth rates he wishes to explain, but by referring to the theory of his first book. The second chapter is simply titled "The Logic," the third "The Implications." Olson moves from the theory of how individuals behave in a free economy (where, theoretically, none of the problems he discusses should occur), to how individuals form groups, and finally to how an economy might become dominated by groups and how it would compare with one without them—*if the theory is correct.*

Only after this long, laborious theoretical exercise is Olson prepared to look at specific countries to see if his theory explains the differences in their growth rates. As it turns out, his theory does rather well. His most novel point—that wars and revolutions eventually lead to economic growth because all the interest groups are decimated and disorganized, allowing the economy to readjust and reallocate its resources—will undoubtedly receive the most attention from other economists and historians. Olson is no Spengler or Toynbee, unrolling the scroll of history in order to project the future paths of nations, but when he cites nations for which his theory might be true the book is intuitively appealing. Japan, Germany, and France, for instance, came out of World War II with not only their industrial but their political infrastructure in ruins. The rebuilding of the physical plant, Olson suggests, may have been less important than the rebuilding of the nations' political and economic interest groups. Unions in both Japan and Germany are far larger and more encompassing than those in Britain and the United States (where national boundaries have been unchanged by war in this century), and their size makes them act more responsibly, because they have a far greater stake in the overall performance of the national economy.

But this is where the story ends, right where it should begin. After demonstrating that his theory explains some of the differences between nations, regions, and cities, he only hints at what this implies about economic policy. He suggests that free markets work better than unfree ones ("the best macroeconomic policy is a good microeconomic policy"), and that a growing free economy is better for the poor than one dominated by economic or political interest groups. ("There is a greater inequality, I hypothesize, in the opportunity to create distributional coalitions than there is in the inherent productive abilities of people.") Olson is certainly right about these matters, but what makes his book so frustrating is that he simply does not know how to apply these novel and valuable insights in the real world.

For instance, just what are these "groups" to which he keeps referring? Ever careful not to offend politically, he makes it clear that he is not singling out unions for blame, that all kinds of interest groups— cartels, guilds (e.g., the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association), oligopolies, trade organizations, lobbyists—can theoretically retard economic growth by fixing wages or prices, by maintaining tariffs, or by counterproductive taxation. But which ones are more to blame in the U.S.? In Britain? Canada? How have they been formed historically, and what kinds of political and religious cultures support them? What sort of political and economic arrangements will allow us to achieve sufficient economic growth without diminishing political representation? Can a country rekindle entrepreneurship and innovation through different taxing and spending schemes? Or is revolution or war the only hope?

THE MORE one thinks about it, the narrower Olson's economic theorizing appears. Yes, it is undoubtedly true that the war allowed Japan to restructure in every way, but can we really say we understand Japanese work and saving practices without examining Japanese history, Buddhism, the family, the legal system, and factory management? Or can we understand the past century of economic stagnation in Spain and Italy without understanding the importance of Catholicism there? Whenever Olson mentions such noneconomic factors, he dismisses them as "folk wisdom" or "ad hoc arguments" because they can't be quantified, can't be graphed, can't be fed into a computer.

At the center of such a narrow view is a syllogism that is planted, albeit innocently, in the heads of students on the very first day of their very first economics class: all important human behavior can be interpreted economically; economic theory allows one to make power-

ful and broad generalizations about the world; therefore, any behavior or event that is not explained by economic theory either is not important or cannot be spoken of. While this analytical attitude is useful for understanding small problems and for extending one's intuitions, it is precisely the wrong way to understand national economies. It is commonsensical to everyone but economists that the state of the economy depends on far more than the "economizing" behavior of individuals, that it also depends on certain general historical, political, cultural, even spiritual factors. But how is one to address the noneconomic roots of economic life?

Earlier generations of economists always discussed them under the rubric of "political economy." But now their background and training are so narrowly focused, at such an early age, on graphs and computerized mathematical modeling, that economists have become incapable of sustaining the most rudimentary discussjon of the "industrial spirit," bourgeois life, entrepreneurship, or the consequences of affluence, without aping the language of scientists. They speak of "markets," but seldom of capitalism anymore, let alone of the "democratic capitalism" of most of the Western countries they study. They speak of "value" and "preferences" without asking how those are formed, or how a change in them can affect the economy at large.

So it will be up to noneconomists who are familiar with economic analysis (of whom there are few) to read Olson's book and draw whatever historical, political, cultural, and public-policy lessons that lie dormant there. This will be difficult both because many good minds have been ruined by the scientific pretensions of contemporary economic theory and economics education, and because many more good minds have been turned away from learning the most fundamental economic truths by those same pretensions. But *someone* will have to do the translating; the state of the economy has become too important to be left to economists. ■



The Unimportance of Being Earnest

by Frances Taliaferro

When it comes to novels, vitality has it over virtue.

Where the reading of novels prevails as a habit, it occasions in time the entire destruction of the powers of the mind. . . . It conveys no trustworthy information as to facts; it produces no improvement of the intellect, but fills the mind with a mawkish and morbid sensibility, which is directly hostile to the cultivation, invigoration and enlargement of the nobler faculties of the understanding.

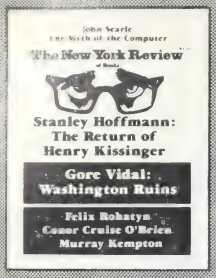
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817)

COLERIDGE'S dictum comes as a horrid shock to the ordinary reader. "The cultivation, invigoration and enlargement of the nobler faculties of the understanding"—is *that* what we were meant to be doing? Just what are the nobler faculties of the understanding anyway, and what can you use them for? If you really need them, can't you improve them by cutting down on cholesterol, exercising regularly, and watching PBS? Isn't it enough to stop smoking? Do you have to avoid novels, too?

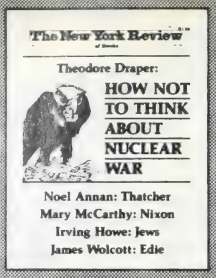
Life is short and sometimes art is very, very long. You can attempt to make room for it. You can keep a copy of Plato in the bathroom, memorize sonnets while you wash the salad greens, and do fifty lines of the *Divine Comedy* every night before you fall asleep; you can nibble Montaigne on the crosstown bus and bolt a paragraph or two of St. Augustine in between spins at the laundromat. Then what? When the flesh is weak, we need novels. Coleridge was a fine one to talk of destructive habits; surely novels are

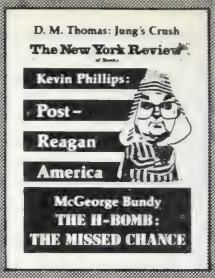
Frances Taliaferro teaches at The Brearley School.

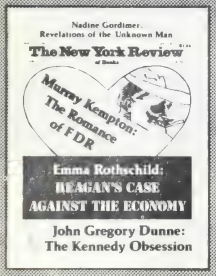
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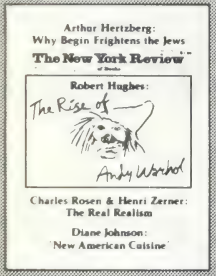


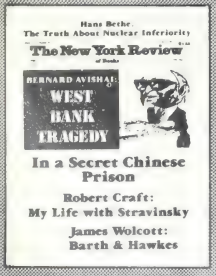


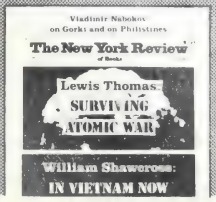












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a more wholesome tipple than laudanum. As Q. D. Leavis points out in her classic *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), people read novels

1. *To pass time not unpleasantly.*
2. *To obtain vicarious satisfaction or compensation for life.*
3. *To obtain assistance in the business of living.*
4. *To enrich the quality of living by extending, deepening, refining, co-ordinating experience.*

The search for depravity is nowhere on the list.

Mrs. Leavis goes on, however, to note the split between popular and cultivated taste in reading, a split that widened in the nineteenth century, when the reading public ceased to be homogeneous. She argues that all sorts and conditions of eighteenth-century readers were satisfied by Fielding and Sterne, but a great gulf is fixed between the readers of Henry James on the one hand and Marie Corelli on the other. In our time, we might observe a similar gap between readers of Nadine Gordimer and Jacqueline Susann, or of Milan Kundera and Harold Robbins. Whatever their shortcomings, the former write with serious readers in mind; the latter are in the business of providing what Hamlet calls "a jig, or a tale of bawdry."

There are times when reading ought to be "serious" and even painful. A noble subject may be intellectually or emotionally difficult to confront. Prose may be dauntingly academic; poetry compels a concentration unknown in sloppy old daily life. On the other hand, it is not wicked to enjoy jigs and tales of bawdry. Mrs. Leavis speaks of such novels as "lower organism[s] that [exude] vitality as richly as a manure heap." Of course we need them for their power to attract tentative readers and invigorate the larger public, but we also need them to revive exhausted literati. Art thou pale for weariness of the bony minimalists, the drearier East European writers, and the polymaths turned novelists? Time for a healthy gobble of something squishy off the best-seller list, something by Judith Krantz or Ken Follett.

UNFORTUNATELY, fiction does not conveniently divide itself into neat piles of sacred and profane, gold and dross. Between those extremes is a messy temperate zone inhabited by all sorts of middling novels: they don't come close to being great art, but they certainly can't be called trash. They make some pretensions but few demands; their artistic temperature is neither hot nor cold but tepid. At their worst, they are about as challenging as frozen pizza. At their best, they are excellent "training novels" that prepare us to become serious readers someday: *Of Human Bondage*; *Rebecca*; *The Good Earth*; *The Forsyte Saga*; *Lost Horizon*; *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

But at their most characteristic, these novels are just plain mediocre: the literary equivalent of motel decor, canned asparagus, Muzak, and made-for-television movies. Because they neither agitate nor exalt, they are safe enough to read in your hospital bed. They tend to be written by women with three names and my local librarian calls them "old lady novels," but I think they appeal to the fourteen-year-old in all of us. Their setting is ostensibly the adult world, and through reading them we hope to be admitted without risk to mysteries of and beyond our experience: marital discord and familial entropy, sexual malaise, bankruptcy of heart and soul, physical suffering, madness, despair, and suicide, the secrets of the human condition with all their curious variety. In their subjects, such novels are hardly different from, say, *King Lear* or Samuel I and II. It is their treatment that reveals their state of arrested development.

These middling novels are based on the Confucian principle that there is no spectacle more agreeable than to observe an old friend fall from a rooftop. Typically, the characters of these novels seem like "old friends"—if not *mon semblable, mon frère*, then at least someone I recognize from my neighborhood or my club, someone whose daily circumstances persuade me that I can easily identify with him. It is not our humanity that joins us but our credentials, our possessions, our schedules. There is no shock of illumination in meeting such a character, only a nod of recognition, what Forster calls "a friendliness, as of dwarfs shaking hands."

These middling novels keep the reader in a state of emotional dwarfishness, or a perpetual pubescence with no likelihood of adult consummations. Such novels are often virtuously made: the narrative is skillfully assembled, the dialogue plausible, the point of view consistent, and so forth. But for all his competence, the middling novelist will not take the risk of guiding the reader into unexpected territory. Instead, he depends on stock responses to do his work for him, and consciously or unconsciously supplies his novel with stock characters and stock misfortunes, situations whose popular sociology and pathology are familiar to those who gossip or watch the news or read the Sunday magazine. In this way does the novelist provide the pleasing spectacle of an old friend falling from a rooftop.

Of course readers love it. They can also justify spending time on it. As Q. D. Leavis points out, "The reader of the great best sellers goes to them partly to be confirmed in his prejudices and 'uplifted.'" Decent, worthy readers have

> *a genuine sense of something wrong with the world. They expect the novelist to answer real questions . . .—in effect, to help them manage their lives by dramatising their problems and so offering a solution, by lending his support to their code of feeling and generally by expressing their own half-conscious or perplexed "feelings about" Life.*

Reading such a novel gives the same sort of comfort as a long talk with a good old friend: not much intellectual stimulation, but a lot of shared secrets and a heartening con-

viction that we're all in this together.

Ordinary People by Judith Guest is a good example of this friendly experience. Thousands of readers were pleased to hear that Judith Guest was not a famous novelist but just a nice person whose book a publisher (Viking) accepted, out of the blue, on its own merits. Those merits include compassion, understanding and humor, a kind appreciation of adolescents, and a gift for reproducing the likable banter of everyday life. Add to this the solution of a problem, the rehabilitation of a teenager who works through his suicidal guilt over his brother's accidental death with the help of a funny, earthy, admirably sensible psychotherapist. Conrad, the troubled teenager, and Calvin, his father, prevail because they are capable of love and growth. For Beth, the exquisitely organized wife and mother, there is no hope because there is no possibility of self-knowledge or change. The fact that we know almost nothing of her character beyond its coldness is of no account; the uplifting message of *Ordinary People* is that love, openness, and humor are better than worldly success and cold perfection.

SECOND HEAVEN, Judith Guest's second novel,* is another likable book involving a troubled adolescent: a boy named Gale who has run away from home and become a boarder with Cat, a recently divorced woman in her forties. Cat, lovable and unconventional, is better off without her surgeon husband and her world of empty suburban privilege, but she must still make her way back to meaningful life. ("After the divorce the world had suddenly been filled with people she couldn't believe in.") To life she returns, aided by a kindly psychologist, by her divorce lawyer, who becomes her friend and lover, and by the boy Gale. ("Here was someone who needed her. She liked the feel of it.") At the end, when Gale has been rescued from his abusive father and legally placed in Cat's foster care, it looks as if everyone will have a second chance at living. What crank would object to such a denouement? *Second Heaven* is a novel of decent people and blameless sentiments; a kindhearted, worthy novel, solidly made—and irreproachably boring.

Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey's first novel, *A Woman of Independent Means*, was the entertaining epistolary account of a spunky woman's life, spanning several decades of the twentieth century. *Life Sentences,** her second novel, tells in conventional form the story of Lindsay Howard, a successful writer and editor who decides to keep the child she conceives as the result of rape (by a mysterious man of corporate-executive appearance who afterward sends her a wicker hamper of delicacies from Maison Glass). By page 29, we have also learned that Lindsay's husband lies paralyzed forever in a hospital in New Rochelle and that her lover's marriage failed when his wife's three pregnancies ended in miscarriage, stillbirth, and crib death. Misfortunes abound. Lindsay, a self-reliant orphan, would prefer to finish her pregnancy cared for by strangers and denying her own need for love, but her long-lost college classmates Cissy and Meg rally round, a kindly physician makes daily (gratis) house calls, and when at last the baby is born there is reconciliation, love, and growth on all sides.

Life Sentences is wooden, cluttered, and suffocatingly improbable, but it shares certain characteristics with other, better middling novels. These are earnest books, dedicated to human decency, to the sanctity of the "growing experience," and the desirability of "embracing life." Their sentiments reassure us that there is much to be learned from our own misfortunes and those of others, and that virtue resides in the generous exercise of "interpersonal skills." Such novels inspire the reader to go and hug his child (or spouse, or student, or colleague —whoever can be touched by the healing power of emotional honesty). Motherhood may no longer be specifically glorified, but "parenting" brings fulfillment and there might be apple pie for dinner. Furthermore, we readers know we belong, because the conversations of these fictional characters prove that everyone else's family is just as boring as our own.

Only a very degenerate reader, such as myself, would feel the urge to run screaming from these worthy novels and seek the healing power of trash; that is, however, just what the works of Guest and Hailey caused me to do. Soggy with despair, I was lucky enough to be given Shirley Conran's *Lace*,* a 600-page concoction that lifted my spirits in no time. Unlike those tepid middling novels whose sentiments come straight from the heart, *Lace* gives every sign of having been written in cold blood, with commercial triumph in mind. Insofar as its plot depends on the "bonding" of a group of women who knew each other as teenagers at finishing school in Switzerland, *Lace* makes use of the feminist clichés of the past decade. Otherwise it is devoted to worldly success, handsome decor and beautiful clothes, glamorous careers, blood-curdling deaths, movie stars, Greek shipping magnates, French and British aristocrats, Arabian royalty, and all sorts of ecstatic, mind-boggling sex, including one incest averted and another unknowingly committed. Oh, rapture! Never mind verisimilitude; what this jolly novel has is energy. I think even Q. D. Leavis would have approved, and might have said of *Lace* (as she did of *Jane Eyre*) that "Bad writing, false sentiment, sheer silliness, and a preposterous narrative are all carried along by the magnificent vitality of the author. . . ."

In conclusion, the soundest advice for readers of novels comes from the Book of Revelation (3:15-16):

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were either cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue you out of my mouth. ■

* Viking Press, $14.95.

* Delacorte, $15.95.

* Simon & Schuster, $16.95.



Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals, edited by Leslie A. Marchand. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 416 pages. $17.50.

"I am not a cautious letter writer," Byron remarked in one of the more than 3,000 letters he wrote during his short lifetime (he died in 1824 at the age of thirty-six). The letters and journals in this book have been selected from the unexpurgated, twelve-volume (John Murray–Harvard) edition, and in their candor, wit, and perceptiveness, they serve him better than any biographer.

Byron was a literary star by his early twenties. *The Corsair* sold 10,000 copies on publication day; women laid siege to its author (who once cheerfully replied to an ardent fan letter, "I will promise not to make love to you unless you like it"). Profligate and rakish all his life, Byron plunged into volatile entanglements, a disastrous marriage, and an incestuous affair with his half-sister. Exhausted by debts and notoriety, he fled to the Continent in 1816, and thereafter conducted much of his business, friendship, and flirtation by mail. The letters—by turns passionate, worldly, businesslike, scurrilous, gossipy, tender, despondent—exude charm and wayward intelligence, and above all the rippling energy with which this prototype of the Romantic hero lived and worked.

In Italy, Byron seduced countless women and fell in love with a few. He trailed a fluctuating entourage of friends and admirers, including the chaotic Shelley household, and passed the time riding, shooting, and talking drunkenly half the night ("all was hiccup and happiness").

But alone, Byron would study languages, read and reread other people's work, and brood over his own. About *Don Juan* he defiantly wrote to his publisher, "The poem will please if it is lively—if it is stupid it will fail—but I will have none of your damned cutting & slashing." Despite his ferocious contempt for England's "narrow prejudices," literary and social, he wanted to be accepted and admired. Seldom content, he was obsessed with the violent contradictions in his life. Not long before launching the political crusade that led to his death in Greece, he wrote in his journal what he might, in one of his dark, solitary moments, have felt to be his epitaph: "Man is born *passionate* of body—but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of Good in his Main-spring of Mind—But God help us all!—it is at present a sad jar of atoms." **H. R.**

Camp, by Alan Saperstein. Ticknor & Fields, 256 pages. $12.95.

Alan Saperstein's first novel, *Mom Kills Kids and Self*, was published in 1979 to considerable critical acclaim. He won the Hemingway Award for Best First Fiction for it. The title of the book alone implied some comment on modern society and its dangers and obsessions, and its successor, *Camp*, is evidently meant to share this kind of concern. It describes the awful fate of a haphazard collection of small boys sent off by their parents one summer to camp. The blurb's encapsulation of the novel's message—"This is a book about the menace of power, about people who, discovering the possibility of power, will do anything to ensure their hold over others"—is hype of the most irritating sort, an attempt to endow an unpleasant piece of sensationalism with portent and dignity.

The camp is started by a sick, obsessive chiropractor, who specializes in beating up little boys in the name of science, and his slimy photographer sidekick (once a patient, now a convert) in a muddy clearing in the middle of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Why? Here's where the "power" supposedly comes in, but mostly it seems the bonecracker is turned on by little boys and wants to show the world what a genius he is. So the photographer fakes up a great brochure using child models and his perversely brilliant talent, and then recruits a bunch of little boys whose parents think they need to learn to live without their mothers, stop wetting the bed, and so forth. The parents wave them off on the bus with never a second thought and then rush off to pursue their own horrid grown-up hangups. The counselors the photographer hires either have severe adjustment problems of their own or escape in horror on the second day. One of them does return, but only with a halfhearted policeman whom no one dares tell about the chiropractor's sadistic manipulations, the terrorizing of the kids, the total and unexplained disappearance of one of the boys, etc.

After a lot of heavy suspense-building based on much facile psychologizing, the novel's finished off—in all senses—with a huge scene of gratuitous mayhem and arson that gets rid of everybody, leaving the author to take a last dig at the obtuse shallowness of TV news crews, and the reader with absolutely no clue as to why the book was ever written. Don't let anyone tell you this is sensitive social comment. It's pulp. **T. G.**

A Boy's Own Story, by Edmund White. E. P. Dutton, 218 pages. $13.95.

Edmund White's four previous books split neatly into two general categories—novels highly acclaimed for their polished prose (*Forgetting Elena* and *Nocturnes for the King of Naples*) and nonfiction books on gay society (*The Joy of Gay Sex*

and *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America*). *A Boy's Own Story* is a poignant combination of the two genres, a first-person novel (undoubtedly autobiographical in part) about a boy growing up homosexual in the 1950s, and written with the flourish of a master stylist. It opens with the boy as a fifteen-year-old on vacation with his father and stepmother at their summer cottage. The unnamed narrator is attracted to the athletic grace and unself-conscious manner of Kevin, the twelve-year-old son of guests. The narrator, quite aware of his homosexuality by then, cajoles Kevin into bed with firsthand fabrications of the protocol for seducing women, and Kevin, wowed by this worldly mate, becomes a willing partner, except for his refusal to kiss.

The story winds fluently through events of the narrator's youth. The boy is cursed with a maddening family. His rich father is insensitive, withdrawn, unfaithful, and obsessed with money; his older sister is a brute who assaults him with a barrage of cruel, condescending taunts and an occasional physical assault; and his mother is a fawning dimwit who, after divorcing his father when the boy is seven, subjects her children to a nomadic life, whimsical economizing (frugal with family groceries, lavish with her wardrobe), and preposterous chatter. The boy contends with a succession of friends, fantasies, bohemians, camp counselors, and schoolmasters, and a self-absorbed psychoanalyst.

This is a sympathetic evocation of a youth's faltering realization but ultimate acceptance of his homosexuality. He strains for signs of mutual inclinations in other boys and men, and occasionally picks up a hustler; a romantic, he fantasizes about a handsome lord who will rescue him from his family, and sometimes wishes he would fall in love with a girl. While the boy's emerging sexuality dominates the story, White has succeeded in demonstrating that this, however disquieting, is only one of the throes of his coming of age. It is an endearing portrait of a child's longing to be charming, popular, powerful, and loved, and of his struggles with adults, whom he discovers to be frequently inept and hypocritical—all the more engaging because it is told with such sensitivity and elegance. **J. B.**

Burton and Speke, by William Harrison. St. Martin's Press, 448 pages. $17.95.

By any standards, Richard Francis Burton is a figure of heroic proportions. "Our demigod of daring," Swinburne called him. He was a poet, anthropologist, philosopher, and linguist who published forty-seven volumes during his lifetime. He was possessed of a sexual appetite of legendary voracity. His researches encompassed male brothels in India, female circumcision in Africa, and farting—material sufficiently controversial so that, on the night of his death, his widow, Isabel, burned forty-one additional unpublished manuscripts, "hoping to secure and preserve his reputation."

In 1854 John Hanning Speke, a lieutenant in the Indian army who had walked the Himalayas to Katmandu, discovered Burton in a brothel in Aden. Burton was already famous for having penetrated the holy shrines of Islam in the guise of an Afghan pilgrim, and was then planning his assault on the "forbidden" city of Harar in Zanzibar.

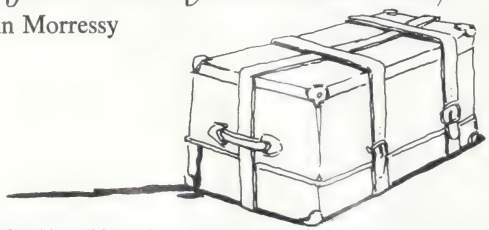
"I want to go to Africa to die," Speke says to Burton at the outset of William Harrison's novel about their association. It was a tense, strange, volatile relationship. In the next ten years it would make Speke famous, and kill him.

Burton was arrogant and bombastic, but he was also committed to what he called "the dignity of pride and dirt," an idea that, in the context of nineteenth-century attitudes toward "savages," is very nearly enlightened. Speke, on the other hand, was full of English phlegm. He was also the victim of what he called his "curse"—homosexuality—which he restrained with an iron will and ruinous effects. The clash of these contradictory temperaments is the leitmotif of Harrison's brisk retelling of their adventures on four continents.

Harrison traces their quests for the source of the Nile—the "fabled inland lakes" Ptolemy wrote of—and their discoveries of Lake Tanganyika and Victoria Nyanza. The explorations were arduous and heroic, yet devolved into a bitter public feud for credit, and a controversy over which lake was the true Nile source that was not resolved until after Burton's death in 1890. The narrative is crammed with detail, though at times it seems a little mechanically researched. Nevertheless, there is an extraordinary wealth of character and event, bringing *Burton and Speke* engagingly close to historical fiction at its best. **J. S.**

Negligible Literary Anecdotes No.7

by John Morressy



During his residence in Brattleboro, Rudyard Kipling developed a great fondness for maple syrup on his pancakes. When he returned to England, he brought with him two small casks of syrup, which he packed very carefully in his trunk. One of the casks broke in transit, ruining several pairs of his favorite socks.

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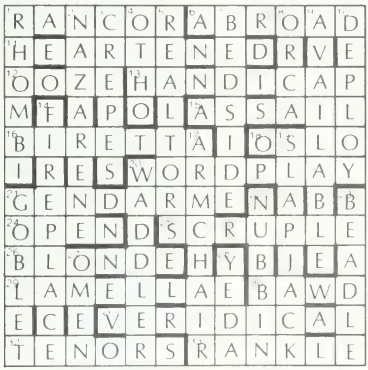
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Solution to the September Puzzle
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Across: 1. ran-co(b)r/a; 6. r/ab-ro-A.D., reversal; 11. heartened/r, anagram; 12. o(oz.-E)/h; 13. e/(hand-l)cap, pace reversed; 15. l/ass-ail; 16. biret(anagram)-Ta/i; 18. i/Oslo, hidden; 20. s/wordplay, two meanings; 21. gendarme/n, anagram; 24. op.-en/d; 25. d/s(c)ruple, anagram; 26. B-londe/h, anagram; 29. lamellae/b, anagram; 30. e/bawd, anagram; 31. e/ver-I'd-l-cal.; 32. tenors/r(0), anagram; 33. s/r.-ankle.

Down: 1. R-hom(e)-bi/g; 2. nazarene/o, anagram; 3. c(a)r-epes/d (anagram); 4. O.T.-ho/t; 5. real-tors/e (anagram); 7. B-edside/r, anagram; 8. orca/s. hidden; 9. avail-a-ble/w; 10. de(ploy)/b, bed reversed; 14. o/f-ire-place; 17. a/armch (anagram)-air; 19. a-/S-lap-jack; 20. t/waddle-R; 21. I/(gob)let; 22. p/(n)ub-bin; 23. y/b(reversal)-eadle(anagram); 27. (y)e/omen; 28. r/(v)ed-a.

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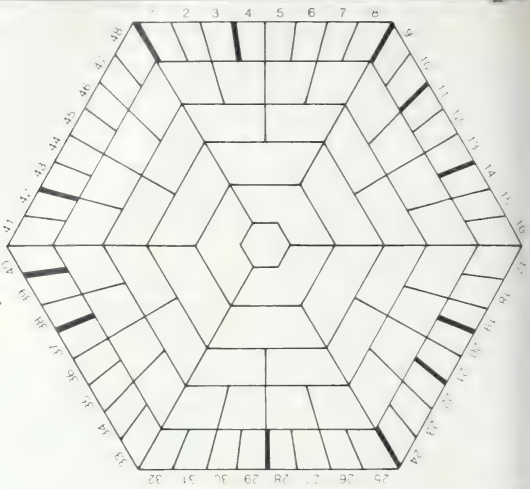
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Hex

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Trochos of *The Listener*)



This month's instructions:

This six-sided diagram is filled with six-letter words, with their letters entered *in mixed order* from the numbered perimeter space to the center space. As can be seen, each entry shares five of its letters with an adjacent entry, four letters with four adjacent entries, and so on; the central letter appears in all entries.

When the diagram is completed, the letters around the hexagonal perimeter, reading from 1 to 48, spell out an appropriate quotation; word endings are indicated. The twelve letters in the third hexagonal path, counting in from the perimeter, spell out the quotation's author, clockwise, from a space to be discovered. The fourth hexagonal path contains six different letters, the fifth contains three different letters.

Clue answers include four proper nouns; 24 is an obscure word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 79.

CLUES

1. One who goes slowly back through gospel truths
2. Early Protestant breaks the rule endlessly
3. Tell about high church official going topless
4. Small bay mare, stumbling around, left track at the start
5. Dame with natural resource in abundance
6. Woodsman's record-keeper
7. Bird making two circles, one of them in anger
8. Stir summer drink
9. One who eats egg with lettuce or cabbage
10. Intimate the devil's in the right? Just the opposite!
11. Keep the Transit Authority in check
12. This needs a truss—the lady's turned in one
13. I only half remember following book in galley form
14. Singing voice's quality is heard in *Trees*
15. Cooking chicken without right source of hot water
16. Important European city, even with 51 leaving!
17. They're totally bare, including (gee!) elbows
18. New international organization recollected dues
19. Part of New York City is beautiful women
20. Small tailless horse with little decoration
21. Warning more off?
22. German fruitcake doesn't have its center hot
23. Orphan seldom comprehends a fairy-tale character
24. Puts oil on article Lee's broken
25. They cut 1,000 people in debt
26. They bring suit tailors, or sew around front of overcoat
27. Swears off fish
28. The ocean claimed by a country was surrounding territory
29. Slow-moving garden tools?
30. Agrees to be cast again in Broadway musical
31. Annapolis's river has separate navy
32. German, in free verse, is touching
33. Makes over *Red Shoes* heartlessly
34. Fiats rode off sides of roads
35. Exhaust sounds excessive
36. Raven wandered back around university
37. Small cut edition was slanted
38. Looped (drunk as a dog)
39. One who doesn't bet in poker? That's a lot of folderol
40. Notes city in Texas
41. Harshly criticized G-man admitting lie in the past
42. Chop tail off dead mosquito without listening
43. The kind of leather that's said to be affected
44. Swerved around piano and complained
45. Socialite used up place for a proposition
46. Hunter was first put off
47. Prince Edward is arrested
48. Sad, the loose ends

CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to Hex, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by October 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the November issue. Winners' names will be printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "Clubs for Clues," are Henry B. Hoover, Jr., Alexandria, Virginia; Daniel Sachs, Kew Gardens, New York; Dr. C. Waymouth, Bar Harbor, Maine.

The uneasy road of the great writer

Great writers may be born to be great writers, but that doesn't necessarily make it easy for them to make their way in the world.

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BY MURRAY SAYLE (AUSTRALIAN)



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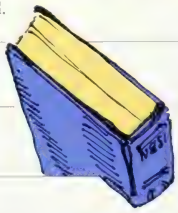
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Cover illustration by Nancy Stahl

Opening Up World Trade

Under the strain of hard times, voices of fear once again are crying out for barriers against imports. America will be making a serious mistake, however, if we allow our present economic problems to obscure the clear lessons of the past.

Since World War II the U.S. and our trading partners have enjoyed growth and prosperity. Much of this progress has been achieved because of an international commitment to free trade.

In 1947 the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) made exporting easier and helped create a global economy. American exports of goods and services grew from $14 billion in 1950 to $367 billion in 1981, creating millions of jobs and raising our standard of living. Exports now generate one-sixth of our manufacturing jobs and one-fifth of our Gross National Product.

Recently, however, as foreign competition has hurt some U.S. industries, some people have suggested turning back the clock to the era of restricted trade. In the face of this temptation, we should recall the disastrous policies of the early 1930s when nations tried to shore up their faltering industries by limiting imports. They were successful—imports fell. But exports also dropped, and the loss of sales worsened the Great Depression.

In an interdependent world, we benefit when our trading partners do well. We have an enlightened self-interest to promote their prosperity. When we buy their goods, they obtain dollars to buy our goods. Jobs are preserved and created here at home when U.S.-built products are sold abroad. International commerce enables all trading partners to enjoy bigger and bigger slices of an expanding economic pie.

To get our economy moving in the right direction, we need to promote policies that will increase our exports—not limit our imports. International competition encourages industries to invest in research and development to improve productivity and create better products at lower cost.

American companies should be more aggressive in pursuing international markets. Only 10 percent of U.S. manufacturing companies are directly involved in exports. Trade authorities estimate at least 20,000 more U.S. firms could easily tap export markets. Government has to do its part, too. Specifically, it can:

- Reflect the reality of what's available in international markets by revising U.S. restrictions on the exporting and re-exporting of data and products made from data licensed by the U.S. to foreign companies; data often available from other non-U.S. sources.
- Permit companies to pool research and share the results.
- Provide adequate lending authority to the Export-Import Bank so U.S. exporters can compete on equal footing with foreign companies.

Our government should work to ensure that U.S. companies have as much access to overseas markets as foreign producers have to the U.S. When the ministers of GATT meet in November, the international trading community should reaffirm its commitment to free trade by deeds as well as words. Many non-tariff barriers remain, impeding a greater flow of goods and services across borders. The U.S. should take the lead in negotiating the reduction of these restrictions

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are very welcome, especially if they are short and typed doublespaced. We enjoy hearing from readers, even though volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

LETTERS



Docking doctors' pay

There are no easy solutions to the shortage of nurses and the disparity between nurses' and physicians' salaries. David Osborne's article ["Rich Doctors, Poor Nurses," *Harper's*, September] poses some questions that need solving if we are to maintain the quality of health services we have become accustomed to.

Osborne touches on a primary difficulty in the matter of nurses' salaries. Nursing is one of the very few professions in America affected by monopsony, that phenomenon where a few employers hire the majority of workers. Hospitals, the dominant employer of nurses, are generally immune from the competition that should normally drive up salaries. Nurses are beginning to realize the power they have to achieve salaries commensurate with their professional expertise, to get a hearing at levels where policy is established and change initiated, and to ensure the consumer affordable quality health care.

EUNICE COLE, R.N.
President, American Nurses' Association
Kansas City, Mo.

The simplistic title of David Osborne's article reflects its content. Yes, doctors do indeed earn more than nurses. No, doctors do not set nurses' pay; that is done by hospital administrators. Doctors get only nineteen cents of each health dollar, before deducting overhead and taxes. The hospitals get three times that amount. Our union of physicians vigorously supports the upgrading of pay for nurses. However, because we are not their paymasters we cannot accomplish this simply by sharing some of our earnings with them.

The real thrust of this article, however, is the invoking of the politics of envy toward the solution of complex problems that the author either glosses over or chooses not to tackle at all. Inflation, expensive new technology, high malpractice insurance premiums, and the profligate practices of the hospital–health insurance complex are the real villains of this piece. The waging of a sort of *nouveau* class warfare is a poor approach to complicated problems.

SANFORD A. MARCUS, M.D.
President, Union of American Physicians and Dentists
Oakland, Calif.

Why didn't David Osborne marry a nurse instead of a doctor?

MARTHA WEST
Beloit, Wis.

I am an internist, certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. In fact, I am the only internist at the Berea Hospital, which serves this rural area. This is a twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week job.

This is, I am sure, considered a very unusual way of life, and I must accept the responsibility for choosing it. But it does put me in a position to counter some of David Osborne's opinions of the proper way to treat physicians in this country. Let me assure you: I am the first to agree that nursing is a grossly underpaid profession and I support efforts to improve nurses' lot, although Mr. Osborne's suggestion in support of "responsible" strikes is not only dangerous but stupid. I also agree that patients have no idea what they need, nor do they know what they are receiving from the medical profession. Much of the "fat" of medicine could be cut out if patients were more aware. However, even well-educated people have

bsolutely no practical way to pick good" physicians or to choose what hey need or don't need in the way f procedures. In my experience, many ehement proponents of limiting ealth-care costs are the very ones who insist on the most sophisticated nd expensive tests for reassurance f their own complaints.

For my round-the-clock availabilty, I made $32,000 less last year han Mr. Osborne's suggested median. My wife, a registered nurse, works or me for $5,200 more per year than Mr. Osborne's average office nurse's alary. This is somewhat less than what pay the other R.N. in my office. Neither my salary nor my wife's was ncluded in my $120,000 operating expenses last year. In addition, I and ill of my employees receive about 25 percent more each year from my corporation's pension and profit-sharing plans.

Should Mr. Osborne's opinions be correct for the New York area, I strongly feel they do not hold for much of the rest of the country —there is indeed life west of the Delaware River.

John Moser Johnstone, M.D.
Berea, Ky.

Outrage

No doubt the reaction expected by Robert Asahina to his review of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's biography of Hannah Arendt ["Who Was That Mass Man, Anyway?" *Harper's*, September] is outrage, particularly on the part of Arendt partisans. Unfortunately, the issue ought not be the tiresome "for or against" attitude of the past twenty years toward Arendt's writing. Young-Bruehl's book is criticized in the review perhaps because the author is ignorant of what there might be in the book to criticize. He takes on Arendt, but a serious criticism of Arendt's thought is never attempted, and his failure to give a reasonable account of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* or its relationship to Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, despite the length of the review, is regrettable.

The most disturbing fact about this review is not, obviously, that it attempts a critical posture. It purports to be about Arendt but is based solely, it appears, on the first full-length biography, whose problems the reviewer cannot even begin to identify. The problem is that it is an offense to the serious discussion of the issues of freedom, politics, knowledge, ethics, and modern history, which were argued seriously by Arendt and her most virulent detractors and intense supporters alike. Mr. Asahina's review is merely the glib, trite perpetuation of past half-truths and sheer ignorance. Finally, to turn Mr. Asahina's closing sentence on himself, his review has no shred of humility; it displays facile snobbery based on no evident competence; it appears never to have contemplated either the presence or absence of metaphysical issues.

Leon Botstein
President, Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Testing treatments

The article by Charles Fox ["Waiting for Interferon," *Harper's*, September] describes his tribulations as a victim of multiple sclerosis trying to find an effective treatment, and his experiences, both positive and negative, with the medical profession.

Fox touches on all the major problems with sensitivity, passion, and intelligence, and one hesitates to find fault with his praiseworthy essay. Yet one of his principal conclusions seems to me sadly in error: "It was for chemical medicine that our current methodology of proof was devised. But we are not dealing with chemistry when we talk about interferon and recombinant-DNA material. We are talking about biology. It is a different order and it demands a different methodology. Current methodology, rigorously applied, is as antiquated as warships in an age of smart missiles."

He is right all down the line, but his conclusion is wrong. The requirements of proof remain the same. To prove that a missile, no matter how smart, is really curing multiple sclerosis (or even just making the patient better) requires exactly the same careful statistical design of a clinical trial, the same need for randomization and controls, the same need for objective measurements of change and quantitative scoring techniques, the same need for "blinding" of patient and observer as in a test of cruder "chemical" techniques.

The crux of the problem is ethical —how can you give some patients a new treatment, which may actually work, and expect others to be willing to accept nothing or a placebo? The simplest answer is not to use a placebo but to use a currently accepted treatment in both the control patients and those given the new material. Another is to promise that the moment the results add up to proof that the new treatment works, it will be given to the controls too. One must never lose sight of the possibility that the new treatment will not work; very few of the 120 treatments for MS recommended over the last century have had any effect.

Harper's has done us all a service by publishing Fox's very human account. I hope this letter may be taken as a footnote that he inadvertently omitted.

Byron H. Waksman, M.D.
Director of Research Programs
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
New York, N.Y.

It is understandable that Charles Fox should have a deep sense of anger and frustration in reaction to the tragedy of his neurological disease. However, the expression of this in his article is so reckless that it seriously detracts from what might have been a valuable source of information for other patients with multiple sclerosis. His feelings about the motives of the various medical experts are unpleasant but understandable as a personal interpretation; but he gives a false description of the use of the placebo as part of the double-blind procedure used in FDA drug trials when he states: "In order to establish an effective double blind, scientists have to make sure that the patients not receiving the drug nevertheless suffer side effects similar to those afflicting the patients who are receiving the drug. The result is needless pain and the risk of real danger to the health of the patients."

As Mr. Fox surely should know after his own investigations, a placebo is, by definition, a substance having no pharmacologic effect whatsoever and incapable of causing such effects. This egregious misinterpretation makes his article a biased and sadly graceless critique of the present scientific efforts to understand and find effective treatment for multiple sclerosis, as well as a variety of other diseases.

T. W. Moir, M.D.
Cleveland, Ohio

Tanks again

William Lind's analysis of the state of thinking in our armed forces is

devastating in its accuracy ["Simple Tanks Would Suffice," *Harper's*, September]. He neglects, however, to discuss one of the most important lessons of the naval war in the Falklands: the skillful use of merchant ships as naval auxiliaries by the British. It is sobering to note that while our navy is still growing at an incredible rate, the American merchant fleet continues its slide into obscurity. More merchant vessels sailed to the South Atlantic than warships, but the crucial role played by the *Queen Elizabeth 2* and the *Atlantic Conveyor* has been largely ignored by the press and the military. While we have twelve supercarriers, we have no *QE2* to ferry troops and no operational program to convert container ships like the *Atlantic Conveyor* into auxiliary carriers.

MATTHEW V. FENTON
Vallejo, Calif.

William Lind's analysis of the vulnerability of surface warships, proven again in the Falklands war, is excellent as far as it goes. He convincingly substantiates the contention that the aircraft carrier is not an effective weapon for attacking submarines, the backbone of the Russian navy. However, he did not go on to observe that the threat posed by the balance of the Russian navy cannot possibly justify the huge expense of our carrier fleet. What, then, does justify such expense? Land targets? But in order for carrier aircraft to attack worthwhile land targets, the carrier must launch them within range of land-based aircraft and missiles. The carrier, big or little, cannot survive in such a situation if the enemy possesses sophisticated weaponry.

J. W. MAUPIN
Tucson, Ariz.

Shrinking justice

Stuart Taylor, Jr., gives an excellent summary of the legal, psychiatric, and economic absurdities demonstrated by the Hinckley trial ["Too Much Justice," *Harper's*, September]. Mr. Taylor is in a position to make a well-informed analysis of the legal dilemmas posed by existing legislation on the insanity defense. Indeed, he has conveyed the futility of attempting to ascertain an individual's "sanity" from testimony by teams of defense and prosecution psychiatrists. Thus it is particularly disappointing when he concludes that an additional option in verdicts—"guilty but mentally ill"—would be a sensible alternative to the nonsensical verdict reached.

Apparently Mr. Taylor thinks that such an alternative would protect whoever he feels might be wholly crazy from an unfair prison sentence, while also protecting society from someone such as Mr. Hinckley, whom he describes as "partly crazy." While absolute insanity, or mental disturbance severe enough to absolve an individual from criminal responsibility, is a hypothetical category Mr. Taylor may wish to assume exists, why does he think that psychiatrists should be capable of devising a test and determining—on the basis of the dogma he has just seen presented as scientific fact—who is and who is not partially or completely crazy? Why does he think that society should continue to honor psychiatric court testimony when it has been seen to be not only unreliable but also unbelievable?

It is neither in the interests of society nor of defendants in criminal cases to perpetuate the use of "the defense of last resort." If it were strengthened and extended to include a verdict qualifying psychiatric classification, it might eventually encompass gradations ranging from insane to slightly eccentric. Such pseudomedical meandering would only degrade our conception of man a step further than psychiatric determinism already has, replacing human dignity and stature with the status conferred on well-functioning or defective machinery. It is time to stop legally excusing and legally debasing our fellow humans on the basis of psychiatric conjecture.

LOUISE GORDON
New York, N.Y.

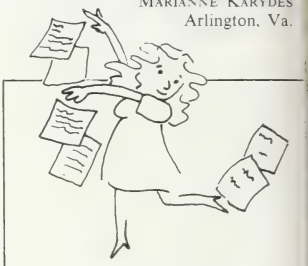
Wild Oates

I cannot thank you, and reviewer James Wolcott, enough for that article on the works of Joyce Carol Oates ["Stop Me Before I Write Again," *Harper's*, September]. I am so relieved to know at last that someone else feels as I do about this woman's joyless, awful work.

I have tried several of her books, but despite a Calvinist penchant for the hair shirt and some spiritual masochism, I have never been able to finish one. I cannot bring myself to care about her creepy characters —her stuff is one long whimper. Life can be rough, to be sure. My own life has had some hell in it, but there is nothing I would not cheerfully relive rather than ever have to plow through another page of Oates.

Let us not even contemplate the dark souls of those who have bestowed so many awards on her, for the woman is boring, boring, boring, the woman is boring, after all.

MARIANNE KARYDES
Arlington, Va.



Report from the Letters Lady

A quiet month, on the whole, though as usual the medical profession seems to be ready to leap to its typewriter. Dentists, doctors, hospice workers, nurses—the last few months appear to have provided frequent opportunities for them to air their views. Tova Reich's story in the August issue, "Gertrude Stein," had what one might conceivably call a medical theme, and it upset quite a few readers. "Scatological slop," says Joyce Lampe of Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela; "racist, sexist, emotionally void, and . . . moronic," says Rhonda Johnson of San Diego, California. Perhaps at first glance one might think any or all of these things about "Gertrude Stein," but I would still like to urge readers who haven't seen what we think is a very fine and perceptive story to try it for themselves.

Time, perhaps, to correct some errors noted by readers. In his article in the August issue, Edward C. Banfield stated that the Metropolitan Museum of Art paid $6 million to acquire Rembrandt's painting of *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*. The price was in fact $2.3 million, and our thanks go to R. D. Mancinelli of Park Ridge, Illinois, for pointing this out. And Jean Hauser of San Diego caught a missing comma on a caption to a picture in the same article: "The huge Arp tapestry made after the artist's death from a small sketch." A terrible way to die, as she says. Keep the letters coming, gentle readers. We want to hear from you. ■

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THOSE WHO CAN'T, CONSULT

by David Owen

Why do experienced executives pay millions for the advice of young punks who've never run anything?

My article-writing consultant advised me to begin this essay with an attention-grabbing joke. I can think of two: 1) a consultant is someone who borrows your watch to tell you the time; 2) a consultant is someone who knows a hundred ways to make love but doesn't know any girls.

Nowadays you can hire a consultant to tell you whether or not you ought to hire a consultant. Or, if you already have a consultant, you can hire another one to tell you what to do with the first. For five years now more top business school graduates have gone into consulting than into any other field. Masters of Business Administration who actually go to work administering businesses are looked down on as being a touch, well, proletarian.

The main problem with the American economy may be an excess of advice. It almost goes without saying that there are relatively few management consultants in Japan, and that one of the biggest foreign markets for American consulting firms is Great Britain. But of course, it isn't as simple as it sounds.

On the other hand, if you spend time talking to management consultants, you notice that the sentence "It isn't as simple as it sounds" crops up often in their speech. Permit yourself a giggle while a consultant is describing his job and he will quickly add, "But of course, it isn't as simple as it sounds." Talk some more, and you may begin to wonder.

Management consultants are people hired, at enormous expense, to tell executives how to run their companies. The advice they sell can cover anything from what kind of toilet paper to buy for employee washrooms to whether or not top management ought to sell off a struggling division and invest the proceeds in an oil company. Like life itself, consulting firms gravitate toward empty ecological niches. When the economy began to sour a few years ago, the A. T. Kearney Co., one of the largest management consultancies in the country, directed a chunk of its resources into the thitherto unexploited field of bankruptcy consulting. Yes, you can't even go broke anymore without hiring a consultant.

Living, breathing management consultants tend to be recent graduates of big-name business schools, especially Stanford and Harvard. Image is everything in this business, so competition for fancy diplomas can be wicked. "Second year I could have had a free meal every day," boasted a well-fed recent graduate, now a consultant with McKinsey & Co., over a free meal provided by this reporter. Starting salary at a top consulting firm for a twenty-four-year-old Stanford MBA with good table manners and no business experience approaches $55,000, not including bonuses. (I was told that at the Boston Consulting Group this year, some Harvard MBAs were offered a bonus of $6,000 and an Apple computer simply for signing with the firm.) That anyone in the world would be willing to pay that much for someone who has never used a mail room, much less worked in one, suggests that there is more at work here than the rational allocation of human resources by the laws of supply and demand.

The hottest field in management consulting is called strategic planning. Strategic planning began as a consulting fad twenty years ago and today is an industry unto itself. A handful of consulting firms —known in the business as "strategy boutiques"—do nothing but.

David Owen is a New York writer and the author of High School: Undercover With the Class of 1980, *published by Viking.*

Photograph: Bain & Company's Boston offices.

A definition? "Strategic planning," says a young strategic planner with a vintage 1978 Harvard MBA, "is a process for developing a product, which is the plans themselves, and a process, again, a monitoring process for ensuring that those plans are implemented and meet with the expectations, the goals, the objectives, or the results that were anticipated out of the plans. In the sense that it is applied in industry, it is several things. In the sense that it is applied in the consulting world, there were a number of semiproprietary tools and techniques that are no longer really proprietary at all, and a process of getting that done in the most effective and efficient way possible."

Well, it isn't as simple as it sounds.

THOUGH younger than time itself, the management consulting business has been with us for quite a while. It began a century ago with the invention by Frederick Winslow Taylor of the time-and-motion study, a method of analyzing the flow of people and materials around a factory floor. "Taylorites" were trouble-shooting inspectors who roamed production lines with stopwatches and notepads, sleuthing out pockets of inefficiency. They were detail men absorbed by the particular.

The first enduring American consulting firm was founded in 1886 by an MIT graduate named Arthur D. Little. Little's field was chemistry, and he set up a lab in Boston to test for impurities in shipments of sugar and spices. His firm's consulting work remained mostly technical for decades, but gradually clients began to ask for general advice as well. The professor's laboratory changed with the changing times, and today Arthur D. Little, Inc. is the largest management consultancy in the world.

In the years since World War II, the management consulting business has been characterized by something of a hula-hoop mentality. The fads have come and gone. Businessmen look on consulting schemes the way fatties look on gimmicky diets: as shortcuts to the good life. Why beat your brains out wrestling with your problems when you can hire someone who's got it all figured out? While the original emphasis in consulting was on finite problems of a technical nature, the focus gradually widened until today it can be said to encompass almost anything. It is revealing of the consultant's way of thinking that "strategic planning," a term so vague it defies most efforts to define it, is referred to in the industry as a "specialty."

Vague or not, strategic planning may be the sturdiest hula hoop consultants have yet devised. It was invented by a man named Bruce D. Henderson, a twenty-two-year veteran of American industry who founded the Boston Consulting Group in 1963. BCG's ticket to fame and fortune was a concept called the "experience curve," an amalgam of older ideas, including the learning curve, economies of scale, and common sense. The experience curve revealed that the hundredth unit on a production line would cost less to manufacture than the first one did, and by a predictable amount. This is a fairly simple concept (though not, of course, as simple as it sounds). But in the hands of a skillful MBA it is capable of almost limitless complication. BCG consultants used these complications to sell and resell, for large fees, the same basic advice: the bigger your share of a given market, the higher your profits will be, since your elevated production rate will enable you to move down your experience curve (and hence reduce your costs) faster than your competitors. Market share became the holy grail of American industry in the 1970s.

Unfortunately for companies that blindly accepted the emerging gospel, the experience curve proved decidedly fallible. Like most consulting schemes, it was an attempt to treat concrete problems as though they were hypothetical situations, and the usual conflicts with reality ensued. The curve, for example, was hard pressed to explain the success of a company like Mercedes-Benz, which turned a hefty profit on a modest market share, or to prescribe useful strategies for companies that didn't fall into traditional categories. The experience curve, in short, could mean as much or as little as its practitioners wanted it to, and while this vagueness proved fertile for consulting firms, it sometimes bedeviled the executives who applied it to their real-life problems.

And so the experience curve fell out of favor. But it gave birth to other vendible concepts—or "tools," as consultants call them, in an effort to lend their calling a hammer-and-nails solidity. Among



Bruce D. Henderson of the Boston Consulting Group: "I don't think of strategy as being anything but a buzz word."

the newer tools was the "product portfolio," a colorful but innocuous-looking chart that depicts the allocation of resources among the divisions of a company. Take a piece of paper and divide it into quarters. In the upper left-hand corner draw a star; in the lower left-hand corner draw a cow with a bulging udder; in the lower right-hand corner draw a dog; in the upper right-hand corner draw a question mark. This, friends, is a product portfolio, also known as a growth-share matrix, and its meaning is as follows: stars are divisions that use a lot of cash but pay their way by generating equivalent amounts; cash cows are divisions that consume relatively little cash but generate great amounts of it; dogs are divisions

that eat cash for breakfast; question marks are inscrutable gambles.

To a layman, a product portfolio may seem as inscrutable as a question mark, but to a consultant it can be a treasure trove of meaning. With the vertical axis representing market share and the horizontal axis representing market growth, the matrix is a handy device for depicting the size, type, and quality (in terms of net cash generation) of the various products a company makes. If a given company consists mostly of dogs (low growth, low market share), it's in serious trouble. If it consists mostly of cash cows (low growth, high market share), it's fat and happy for the moment, although it isn't going anywhere. In the ideal configuration, the company's cash flows are balanced, with contented cows financing risky question marks, and worthless dogs kept to a minimum. As it is generally presented, the matrix is a colorful array of different-sized circles that stops the breath of executives when it's flashed onto a slide screen. It can be used to illustrate why a client company ought to fire a group of managers, or attempt an unfriendly merger, or unload an ailing division. It is, in short, the philosopher's stone of the consulting business. And although the product portfolio has suffered a loss of esteem in the years since it was introduced, it and its numerous offspring are still favorite "tools" in strategic planning.

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SO WHAT is strategic planning? Let's try again. Bruce D. Henderson: "I don't think of strategy as being anything but a buzz word to indicate an area of concern that you'd have a hard time defining but that is clearly important to you."

During the early years of the Boston Consulting Group, concocting strategic tools was less important than attracting MBAs. As a young and struggling firm, BCG found it impossible to hire the Harvard degrees it needed to certify its legitimacy. Older consulting firms, like McKinsey & Co. and Booz, Allen & Hamilton, Inc., were making off with all the choice diplomas. So Henderson and his lieutenants took radical action and changed the course of consulting history; they decided to offer higher salaries than anybody else. Business students drooled appreciatively, and BCG took off.

"For two or three years," Henderson says today, "we hired anyone we wanted. The Harvard faculty got up in arms because we were paying starting MBAs twice as much as they were making as full professors. But we got the reputation among all the MBAs of being the most elite firm, and we got the reputation all over the United States of having the best and smartest people in the country."

As the market for strategy consulting began to heat up, some of the dynamos on BCG's staff realized that they could grab a little market share for themselves. Thus from time to time BCG consultants spun off to form consultancies of their own. Most of the departures were reasonably friendly—like a proud mama, BCG published a list of thirteen of her children in 1979—but some were decidedly not.

In 1973, William W. Bain, Jr., broke away from BCG to form Bain and Company. Bain's case was especially interesting because he, like Bruce Henderson, had never received an MBA. In fact, Bain wasn't even remotely a businessman. Before Henderson had hired him in 1967, he had been head of alumni fund-raising at Vanderbilt University, where he had received his bachelor's degree in history and economics eight years before. BCG's other partners thought Henderson was a fool to hire him, since Bain clearly knew nothing about business, but Henderson, himself a Vanderbilt man, was impressed by Bain's charm and easy manner in dealing with important alumni, and he wanted to put him in charge of running BCG's conferences with executives.

Despite Bain's ignorance of finance—Henderson claims to have spent two hours on an airplane once explaining to him what depreciation is—the former fund-raiser made a meteoric ascent through BCG. In no time at all he became a partner and developed a reputation as the firm's most effective salesman.

Bain left BCG with two other partners, followed almost immediately by four more, and with at least two important BCG clients, Texas Instruments and Black & Decker. Bain also took BCG's MBA-recruiting strategy, which he had helped devise, and applied it with a vengeance. The firm quickly became known as the most aggressive recruiter at the Harvard Business School, where it concentrated most of its recruiting efforts.

Bain's most notorious lure was the so-called exploding offer, a bonus package that diminished in value while a potential recruit pondered it. A business school student might be offered a job for a given salary plus a bonus worth, say, $4,000 if he accepted it immediately. If he waited a week to say yes, the bonus would be cut to $2,000. MBAs were thrown into a frenzy of anxiety, and Harvard responded by banning exploding offers in a set

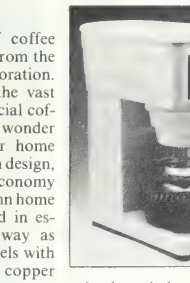
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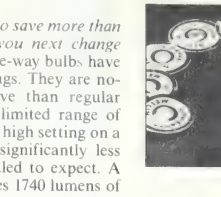
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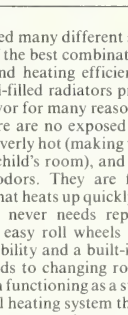
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Lite Savers

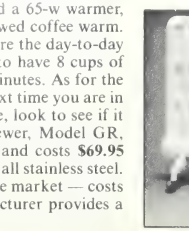


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We've tried many different space heaters in search of the best combination of safety, economy and heating efficiency. The two portable oil-filled radiators presented here won our favor for many reasons, especially safety. There are no exposed flames, they do not get overly hot (making them suitable even for a child's room), and they emit no fumes or odors. They are filled with a special oil that heats up quickly, cools down slowly and never needs replacing. Both styles have easy roll wheels for room-to-room portability and a built-in thermostat that responds to changing room temperatures. When functioning as a supplement to your central heating system these European-made heaters can make your home more comfortable and much more energy efficient. The **DeLonghi** heater, shown above, has a feature not common to most space heaters — *an automatic timer. You can program it to go on and off in 15 minute intervals day or night.* For example, set it to go off a few minutes before you wake in the morning so your bathroom or bedroom has started to warm before you get up! This unit has three heat settings (600w, 900w, 1,500w) and provides a maximum of 5,100 BTUs. The DeLonghi comes in a neutral oyster color, weighs 38 lbs and is UL listed. This model with automatic timer is *not generally available in retail stores* and costs **$150.00** ($12.95) #A485. An identical model without the timer costs **$140.00** ($12.95) #A487. The **Dimplex** panel radiator, (shown on left) offers an attractive contemporary design. The large heating surface of the panel provides an ideal balance of half radiant and half convected heat — no energy is wasted. The unit draws a maximum of 750 watts and produces 2559 BTUs. It's 31½" long x 23½" high and comes in two colors: bronze #A563 or white #A562. The Dimplex radiators cost **$150.00** ($12.95) each.



Register Fan



Every hot air heating system has at least one or two. Cold spots, that is — places that for some reason never quite get up to temperature. Often it is the rooms furthest from the furnace, an unusually large room, or rooms in a later addition. This booster fan (actually it is two small 4″ fans running together) fits right in the register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out into the room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatically as the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which means you can use it in the summer to move the cool air off the floor and up into the room). The fan fits all registers up to 6″ x 14″ and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9′ of cord. The register fan costs **$40.00** (3.95) #A536.

All-In-One Knife



A good Chinese chef can almost keep up with a Cuisinart. The reason is his knife, a large rectangular-bladed implement that Americans often mistakenly call a cleaver. The knife's size is part of its secret — its weight actually does most of the cutting, all you need to do is guide its action. It is an ideal tool for splitting, slicing, shredding, mincing, chopping, boning or filleting and is so well-balanced that it can be wielded in a variety of ways (an illustrated folder shows how) with surprisingly little effort. We are offering two versions of the traditional Chinese knife, both made to the exacting specifications of Joyce Chen. Both blades are 2.5mm chrome molybdenum steel, which will not stain or rust and keeps a long-lasting sharp edge, with a non-slip hardwood handle rivited to a full tang. The larger knife is 12¾″ overall length with a blade 8″ x 3¾″ and costs **$27.00** ($2.95) #A410. The slightly smaller more rectangular version — somewhat more comfortable for those used to handling longer narrower blades — measures 12¼″ with a blade 7½″ x 2½″ and costs **$25.00** ($2.95) #A621.

Shouldering Your Load



This oversize bag is an overwhelming success with photographers, artists, students, musicians, dancers, opera singers, nuns, poets, duck hunters, cyclists, plumbers, teachers, reporters and travelers... because it's a veritable labyrinth of roomy pockets. Its real name is the Danish Bookbag. *New West Magazine* called it simply "The best device for carrying things ever invented." Made of waterproof canvas that wears like iron, the bookbag has an unusual zipper design that enables the bag to expand to double its normal width — to a full 8 inches — so there's always a place to stuff one more thing. It also has two outer pockets in front and a large back pocket. An adjustable 2″ wide strap makes the burden easier. Choose grey #A483, brown #A484, blue #A569 or red #A568. **$59.00** ($3.95).

Teach Your Walkman[tm] To Speak



Personal walk-aroun stereos have changed th listening habits of ov five million America in the past few year Now micro-FIDELIT has taken the same co cept of micro-techno ogy that produced th personal stereo casset and FM stereo playe and applied it to th new MI-FI MFS-630 micro loudspeakers. They plug into any 120V AC receptacle an turn your walkaround into a total miniature component system tha delivers exceptional sound anywhere without headphones! Eac speaker has a built-in 3½ watt microchip amplifier. This extra boos in power combined with the "state-of-the-art" polymer-impregnate long fiber diaphragms produces a staggering amount of tru amplified stereo sound from a remarkably small source. Th speakers, just a little larger than a tennis ball, have a frequenc response of 200-20,000Hz. They plug into any personal stere cassette or FM stereo player and are provided with an integra protection circuit as well as an additional non-amplified input s you can use them with your home system. Maximum powe handling is 20 watts per channel through the non-amplified sectior **$99.00** ($10.00) #A555. If you don't already own a walkaroun cassette player but would like a truly portable stereo system w can send you the MFS-6300 speakers and a MI-FI cassette playe all packaged in a high quality nylon carrying case. The cassett player operates on 3 AA batteries (included) and comes with super light open-air type headphones. **$225.00** ($10.00) #A556. On ou player or yours the MFS-6300 speakers deliver you into a ne world of acoustic possibility. They make any walkaround playe a runaway favorite.

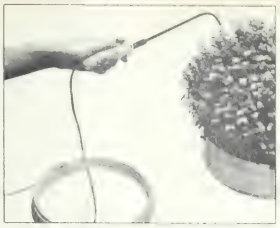
Proper Pepper Preparation



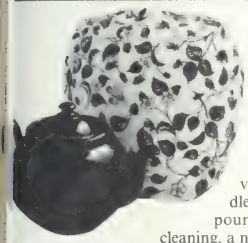
Fresh ground pepper is in the same category as fresh ground coffee — neither bears more than passing resemblance to the pallid tinned variety. Which makes it all the more mystifying why there are so many design flaws in peppermills, including the classic wooden twist kind, especially considering that pepper is the most widely used seasoning in the world. Most peppermills are hard to fill, don't hold much, offer little or no choice of grind, and make it virtually impossible to measure what you have ground (you have to grind over a plate and then try to collect the grounds into a measuring spoon). We are something of pepper fanatics ourselves — having practically given up salt because of its health effects — so it is with considerable delight that we report finding at last a peppermill that does justice to this pungent and delightful condiment. This mill holds a full 3 oz. of corns and the fully removable top makes it so easy to fill and empty that you can switch from black to white or from one variety of peppercorn to another at will. A detachable clear plastic receptacle at the bottom collects the grind anytime measuring is a necessity. The mill is sleek-looking, 6″ high, made of cream-colored plastic and operated by a turnkey. The grinding mechanism is hand-assembled and made of nickel-plated hardened steel for long trouble-free use. An adjustment knob takes the grind from fine powder to coarse grains. Five revolutions of the turnkey, which operates with practically no effort at all, produces ½ teaspoon of pepper. The turnkey mill is equally well suited to kitchen and table use and costs **$35.00** ($2.95) #A617. Use it and like us you'll wonder why it took so long to design a proper peppermill.

Vatering Whiz

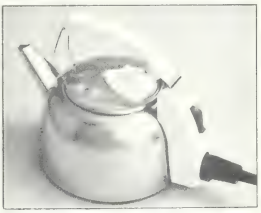
Do your houseplants run
u ragged, back and forth,
p after trip, watering can
hand? There *is* an easier
y: with an indoor garden
se you can water them all
a single trip. Think of the
ps waiting to be saved!
is 50' (that is a *lot* of
ich) vinyl hose readily
aches to any household
icet. From there you just
ce the water where you
int it — an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless
eam of water on and off as needed. This indoor hose comes with
nap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can
ray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs
plant's health as well as its beauty. The complete indoor garden
se kit costs just **$11.00** ($1.95) #A341. It will make your watering
most as simple as turning on the faucet.



ea Times Three



To help you enjoy the perfect pot of tea we've found three exceptional "tea tools." First, the fastest, easiest way to bring 2 quarts of water to a boil is with the **Russell Hobbs tea kettle.** All the nice touches can be found in this British-made electric kettle: a top that vents steam away from the handle, a lid that doesn't tipple as you pour, a wide-mouth top for easy cleaning, a nickel-coated element that resists ineral build-up, a safety switch to prevent damage if the kettle is vitched on empty—it even shuts off automatically after reaching a oil. This top-of-the-line kettle costs **$59.00** ($5.95) #A500. The best apot we've seen is the **Brown Betty by Sadler.** It's rounded with just ie right degree of squatness, so the tea swirls gently after the water poured in, assuring a perfectly balanced infusion. The Brown etty is made from a special red clay available only in one small istrict in England. This clay is legendary for its abilities to hold eat in the teapot and to oddle the brew—attributes iat make a truly classic apot. The Brown Betty has een recognized as the pre-ier teapot for the past 100 ears. It holds 40 oz. (6-8 andard tea cups!) and costs **16.00** ($2.95) #A491. Complete your tea service with n **Irish tea cosy**. It's a quilted loth insulator that keeps econd and third helpings of tea hot in the pot. Made of cotton nd Irish linen, this beautifully decorated tea cosy costs **$16.00** $1.95) #A474.



Slip On Spikes

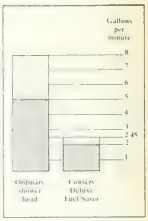


Ice and feet make a treacherous combination. With ice underfoot walking is no longer a mere habit but a reckless challenge to the law of gravity. Fear of falling whispers to us about the danger of our feet flying out from under us in a sudden, total and undignified loss of control. But there is a way to get a grip on the situation. These rubber harnesses slip right over shoes or boots and put four tungsten-carbide-tipped spikes between you and the ice. The new traction and control is effective psychologically as well as physically. The spikes are portable enough to fit easily in a coat pocket or bag and slip on in seconds. Order size small #A633 for shoe sizes up to 8, medium #A634 for 8½-11 and large #A635 for 11½ and over. If you plan to wear the spikes over heavy boots, order the next larger size. The slip-on spikes cost **$16.00** ($2.95) a pair.

Savings In The Shower



This finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver and manufactured by Con-Serv, cuts the use of water — hot water — in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gallons of water — much of it heated — everyday. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of between $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated — utilizing the Venturi principle — for an invigorating shower. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily over the standard ½" shower arm with pliers or a wrench — no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for **$16.00** ($2.95) #A351.



ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUARANTEE: We ship via United Parcel Service wherever possible to insure prompt delivery. The price of each item is shown followed by its shipping and handling charges in ( ). Be sure to add the price ***plus*** *shipping and handling charges for each item ordered to arrive at the* ***total price*** *of each item. If you are not satisfied for any reason, return the article to us within 30 days, and we'll exchange it or refund the cost, per your instructions.*



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ISP Inc. 1982

of recruiting guidelines handed down in the late 1970s. When Bain persisted, Harvard briefly banned Bain's recruiters from certain campus functions. This controversy only increased Bain's allure in the eyes of potential recruits—and potential clients.

BILL BAIN is the Reverend Sun Myung Moon of the management consulting business. The people who work for him are known in the industry as "Bainies." They look alike, they dress alike, they refuse to talk about their company. When a Bainie goes on a business trip, according to industry legend, he doesn't tell his mother where he's going: she might guess the client and blab it to her bridge club.

Like that other great temple of capitalism, the Unification Church, Bain and Company is prospering. The firm's growth rate is estimated by industry insiders to be as high as 50 percent a year, and it has never been lower than 30 percent in the decade since Bill Bain broke away from BCG.



The campus, Harvard Business School: "These are the famous trees that money grows on."

Discovering more than this about Bain and Company is difficult to do. Bainies simply do not talk to outsiders. Bill Bain's cone of silence covers every level of his firm, past, present, and future. Not even Bain clients will talk about the firm; not even former Bain clients will talk about the firm. A young man who was about to go to work at Bain agreed to an interview but called back the next day to say the firm had asked him not to cooperate. "There are interesting things I could say," another Bain consultant assured me. "There are even interesting things I might say; but the chance that you could get me to say them is so slight that I would hate to let you waste your money on lunch." Machismo is second only to secretiveness on the list of charming Bain characteristics.

The ostensible reason for such secrecy is that it protects the interests of clients. But in fact the secrecy is part of consulting machismo, creating a valuable aura of mystery. It also helps prevent outsiders from assessing—or even detecting—what strategic consultants do.

The covert style is part of the myth Bain has worked hard to create about itself, and it's a key ingredient in the team loyalty Bill Bain cultivates in his employees. Bainies are told from the beginning that they are the best in the business, the biggest hotshots around. Rather than trying to temper the legendary arrogance of the greenhorn MBA, Bain and Company fans it to a white heat. Image is what counts, and Bain's image is that of the KGB of consulting firms, the guys you call when asses need to be kicked. All of this is meant to impress potential clients, but the truest believer is often the Bainie himself. Consulting, for him, is almost a religion. Every time he says no to a reporter, every time he hides a plane ticket from his wife, a little jolt of omnipotence courses through his veins.

The bulk of all consulting work is done by extremely junior people, who receive their training on the job. If the truth be known, many of the people who work for Bain are scarcely old enough to order three-martini lunches. An executive of a client company once exploded with rage when he overheard a conversation in the men's room after a presentation and realized that the young Bainie whose advice he had just listened to respectfully (a privilege for which his firm was paying a hefty sum) was a summer intern due back at school the next day.

This sort of experience is always trying for a client. But it can be positively inebriating for a young consultant. "Strategic consulting is really a whole different kettle of fish," says one, comparing the boutique life with that of more traditional consulting firms. "Take a company like Booz. They're a big company, but a large proportion of their business is things like assessing the EPA clean-air standards, doing executive-compensation reviews, estimating housing parity rates for company transfers. Those are all sort of bread-and-butter things to do, but they in no way represent the big-hitter, wheeler-dealer, rock-and-roll consulting, where you whiz around in the company jet drinking Chivas on the rocks and telling the CEO that what he really needs to do is sell off a few divisions."

AND NOW a lesson in couture. "One of the things they used to tell us at Bain and Company," recounts a former Bainie, "was how to dress. There's a method of dressing, you see. You have to know what your client wears and then dress one level above him. If he wears a sport coat, you wear a suit. If you're meeting him in a midwestern cornfield and he's wearing a T-shirt, you wear a button-down. You might actually drive to his office in beige pants, a jacket, and a tie. But you can look in through the window when you get out of your car and then take off as much as you have to." Another ex-Bainie learned to avoid "the Four Ps": plaids, pleats, pointed collars, and polyesters.

Different firms have different styles. A partner at a competing boutique—the word begins to reverberate—described to me his own organization's attitude about appearance. "We're a little bit downhome," he said, "we're a little bit folksy. And sometimes we lay that on a little bit. We don't put on airs."

With so much intimidation in the air, Bill Bain had to do something to keep his hot young MBAs from slitting one another's throats. So he hired—yes—a management consultant, a firm called Dialectics, Inc., of Stamford, Connecticut. Dialectics offers its clients a curious hodgepodge of business advice and posthippie pop psychology. The firm is run by Pam Cuming, better known, perhaps, as the author of *The Power Handbook*. Her consulting package includes something called "assertive responsiveness," which, according to a spokesperson, "teaches you how to assert your own rights while at the same time not stepping on someone else's." In other words, says a former Bainie, the point is "to get you over the notion that power is a dirty word." Bainies refer to Dialectics sessions as "charm school." Every so often the staff is shipped off to, say, the Marriott on Route 128 for what another ex-Bainie describes as "touchy-feely sessions."

Bainies don't leave their hard-won sensitivity at the Marriott. The firm's Boston headquarters are a living monument to the Dialectics ideal. The place looks like a fern bar, the kind of joint where everybody drinks spritzers and you have to tip big if you want an ashtray. Walls and doors are kept to a minimum in favor of a more open environment. Nobody can be responsively assertive (assertively responsive?) if the conduits of communication are blocked. When a Bainie has something to say to another Bainie, he doesn't put it in a memo, he delivers it face-to-face. This is known at the firm as "touching base."

Here we come to another example of Bain machismo. Management consulting firms traditionally conclude projects by handing in written reports: here are your problems, here are our solutions. Bain does not. It makes oral reports and slide presentations, and although it may hand over a copy of the slide show, it doesn't give the client anything to read and ponder. "It gives you a tremendous advantage, as you can imagine," a former Bainie told me with a grin. "All the information sits with Bain, so if you have any interpretive questions about the study, guess who you have to ask? And for a fee, of course." Anyway, he says, reverting to Bain-like arrogance, "it wouldn't do them any good. The reason they came to us in the first place was that we have this superior understanding of the process and are better implementers of that process. It's an example of a little learning being a dangerous thing."

But the most important reason for avoiding written reports is accountability. A client who has no written document to refer to has no objective basis for judging a consultant's worth. This is also the real reason why consultants don't want you to know who their clients are: if you had a clear idea of who was working for whom, you might start trying to compare performance, or even ask whether clients were getting their money's worth.

If American corporations were really serious about making money, they wouldn't hire consultants, they'd open consulting firms. While the rest of the economy sits dead in the water, top management consultancies are having the time of their lives, and Bain is doing at least as well as anybody else. The only limit to the firm's growth for the moment would appear to be its ability to stable its ever increasing herd of MBAs. Last year it hired sixty-five new ones, thirty of them from Harvard, bringing its total professional work force (not counting a few dozen "research associates" without advanced degrees) to about 300. The firm expects to triple in size by 1987, by which time it may have moved into a renovated building on the Boston waterfront. Bain has hinted that it wouldn't mind if the city of Boston ran a ferry service between the waterfront and Logan Airport, on the other side of the harbor, to make it easier for Bainies to swoop in on clients.

Bain's growth rate makes it one of the few places on earth where it's possible to get ahead by standing still: sign on now, and in a couple of years there'll be more people

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below you than above you. This is a potent selling point for business students. A brand-new Bainie can become a partner in as few as three years, sending his salary into the stratosphere and opening up room at the bottom for more MBAs.

Bain supports this pyramid scheme with a relatively tiny client base consisting of only twenty-five or thirty companies. The firm's strategy is to gain access to a company with an initial study "and then metastasize," in the words of a former Bainie. In the ideal scenario,



Richard Hamermesh, Harvard Business School professor and you-know-what.

Bain is hired by top management for a study that gradually expands until Bain's case teams constitute a sort of auxiliary corporate staff. The more pervasive the infiltration, the more money in it for Bain. The firm reduces its marketing costs by stressing long-term relationships, and bells chime when a client agrees to "roll over" a lucrative account. As recently as five years ago, according to a former Bainie, 40 percent of the firm's revenues were derived from a single client, the Monsanto Company.

THE first service a firm like Bain performs for a client company is often to reveal that its problems are not what the client thinks they are. Redefining the problem is a consulting tactic of almost canonical stature, for the simple reason that it enables the consultant to set his own criteria for success or failure. If Company X comes to you complaining that it's being whipped in the marketplace by Company Y, your first move might be to tell it that its true competition isn't Company Y at all, but rather Company Z. Former English majors will remember this ploy affectionately as the Old Switcheroo ("And so we see that *King Lear* is actually a comedy . . ."). Redefining the problem is also a handy way to make sure a client's case is compatible with the "tools" in the consultancy's "kit."

Bain is known in the industry as a cookie-cutter consultancy, a firm that has a standard set of procedures that it applies in one combination or another to every client in its portfolio. No two clients are identical, of course, but as the experience curve teaches, there are definite advantages to making them all seem as alike as possible. The procedures Bain uses, ex-Bainies say, are the ones that have always been synonymous with strategic planning: the experience curve, the product portfolio, and any number of their direct descendants. Bainies use these "tools" to analyze their clients' costs, to define what markets they're competing in, and to identify who their real competitors are. This is precisely the sort of academic analysis that is taught at business schools. Why a corporate chairman needs to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for a green MBA to tell him what business he's in and who his competitors are is the great mystery of strategic consulting.

Young consultants at almost any firm will brag to you until you interrupt them about their "intellectual horsepower," the attribute for which they presume they were hired. But Bainies are valued as much for their relentlessness as for their IQs. Park a Bainie in front of a spreadsheet and a calculator and he'll stay there until you tell him to get up. As a result, Bain's studies are often magnificently detailed, with oceans of minutely pointed data transformed into the catchy, colorful charts and graphs that make up the firm's final slide-show presentations.

After the slide show, reality intrudes. "I remember going to a very high-level meeting with a number of division heads from a major American chemical concern," says a former Bainie. "And this young MBA gets up there and starts talking about opportunity cost, and about strategic relocation of resources, and about market dynamics, trends, and competitive factors. And what he was really saying was that there are some businesses we ought to be in and some we ought to be out of. But those division managers, some of whom had been with the company for forty years, realized that what he was really talking about was making decisions and firing people."

Making decisions and firing people are only two of the business activities that most management consultants never have anything to do with. A consultant could pass an entire lifetime in his business without ever having to meet a budget, or fire anyone more senior than his secretary, or stake his career and reputation on the outcome of one of his plans. While there is little correlation between success in business school and success in business management, there is a very strong —nay, nearly a precise—correlation between success in business school and success in management consulting.

Besides the more arcane studies they undertake, strategic consultancies are usually careful to perform a good deal of old-fashioned cost-reduction for their clients. When a consultant boasts that a given study "more than paid for itself," this is almost always what he means. But hiring a consultant is not the most efficient way to eliminate ordinary inefficiency. Overpaid to begin with, a Bainie bills out his time, one of them told me, at nearly four times his salary. A major client can shell out several million dollars a year for the divided attentions of fewer than a dozen flesh-and-blood consultants. Clients might find it cheaper to hire a few MBAs of their own, even at Bain-type prices.

Just precisely what it is that a consulting firm does for its clients is a question that even consulting firms occasionally feel inclined to ask. A few years ago Bain's top management held an in-house essay contest, offering a prize of several thousand dollars for the best answer to the question "How do we add value?"

Bain's no-talking rule extends to clients, too—part of the mystique. Merely finding out who the firm's clients are is difficult, in part because consultants who leave the firm sign agreements promising never to reveal the list. Still, with some resolute digging, it's possible to turn up a few names. Current clients include Firestone Tire and Rubber, Shawmut Bank, Dun & Bradstreet, Shell (London), and Hewlett-Packard. Recent (and, in one or two cases, perhaps current) clients include National Steel, Morton-Norwich, the PHH Group, McCormick, Siemens, Monsanto, Burlington Industries, Maryland National Bank, and the Shaklee Corporation.

Bain's original clients, Black & Decker and Texas Instruments, are now both customers of Braxton Associates, a Bain spinoff. Texas Instruments uses other firms as well. TI started out as a BCG client, moving to Bain when the new firm broke away in 1973. "Up until 1973, Texas Instruments was doing fine," says Michael Krasko, a Merrill Lynch analyst who has studied TI for a dozen years. "Then subsequent to that the record became very erratic, the peaks and valleys were greater, there was more volatility. All this volatility triggered substantial management changes, changes in product direction every two or three years . . . They've been doing better more recently, but it's still a long climb upward."

Bain and Company may have had absolutely nothing to do with TI's strategy in the middle and late 1970s; then again, Bain may have designed it. But you'll never find out which by reading the business press. In August, for example, *Fortune* magazine ran a cover story on Texas Instruments. The article—under the subhead "With profits under attack, a powerful pioneer of the microchip business cleans house and tries to shake some bad habits"—is sprinkled with consulting buzz words like "strategy," "matrix," and "portfolio." But there are only a couple of passing references to consultants, none of whom is mentioned by name.

SUMMERTIME in Cambridge. The waters of the Charles River gently lap the shore of the Harvard Business School. In a building not far away, a door opens on a handsome office. Fireplace to the left, sofa to the right, carpet on the floor. Half a dozen pictures on the walls—a Rauschenberg, an Appel, a handful of others—presumably on loan from the Fogg Art Museum, but who knows? We are standing, after all, in the office of a Harvard Business School professor. Through the window straight ahead, a panoply of leafy branches. If you look hard enough you can almost read the writing on the leaves: THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE. These are the famous trees that money grows on. They shade the campus from the river to the parking lot, blanketing the ground with green.

The tenant of this well-appointed office is Michael Porter, a brilliant young professor who, like virtually all his colleagues, is also a consultant. Harvard Business School professors are allowed to spend one day a week plying the consulting trade. One day out of five may not seem like much, but at a couple of hundred dollars an hour it can add up. Some professors—Porter among them—further supplement their incomes by writing fast-selling books on strategic topics. A professor who is casual in his interpretation of the one-day-a-week limitation can earn perhaps $150,000 a year on the side (or "150K," as consultants almost always say, weary of lugging around those zeros). Business school professors like to grumble about the "black hole" that swallows up their brightest students, but remember that these are people who have already heaved themselves into the same dark chasm.

To find out where this consulting mania is leading us, I followed my instincts and called in a consultant of my own. "I think the mission of the Harvard Business School," says Richard Hamermesh, Harvard professor and you-know-what, "is to train a future generation of managers, people who can run our companies both big and small. The skills to do that are in part strategic, but they are also managerial skills, administrative skills, skills that involve dealing with large groups of people and managing large budgets and running complicated projects. The problem with consulting is that the largest project you'll ever work on will involve three or four people, maybe as many as ten, all of whom have IQs over 140. That's not the training that we need to deal with the problems of industrial America, or of postindustrial America, even.

"To me the perversity of U.S. industry is that we have CEOs getting $600,000 to $1 million a year and huge executive payrolls, and yet with all their employees and all their resources they are unable to make decisions. I think it's a bad mark on U.S. management and on U.S. industry in general."

It was while talking to business school professors that I finally came to understand what management consulting is really all about: it's a scheme for earning enormous sums of money while still preserving the heady irresponsibility of graduate school. And at Bain you never even have to turn in your term paper.

Alternatively, consulting can be seen as a scheme for making corporations pay retail prices for management skills that used to be available wholesale. The same principle could be applied in other situations. For example, certain bothersome, though not insurmountable, financial considerations severely limit the amount of information any reporter can convey in a mass-market magazine article. Naturally I've had to leave out all my best material. I can be reached in care of this magazine. ■



BUREAUCRATS 2, PRESIDENTS 0

by Leonard Reed

Now that Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan have reformed it, the government is more of a mess than ever.

EDITORIAL writers casting about for kind words to say about Jimmy Carter, after his humiliation in November 1980, found one apparent bright spot in the departing president's otherwise dismal record of domestic accomplishment: his efforts to reform the government. *The New York Times*, in a representative pronouncement entitled ONE IMPORTANT PROMISE KEPT, credited Carter with "the first overhaul of the Federal bureaucracy in almost a century."

Carter's reforms, it was said, had gone a long way toward eliminating three of the most annoying defects of government enterprise. Was it once virtually impossible to fire an incompetent civil servant? "Thanks to the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act," the *Times* reported, "it has become easier to rid the Federal bureaucracy of duds." Were employees who exposed corruption and malfeasance in their agencies typically punished rather than rewarded? Not to worry. "A special counsel has been provided to protect whistleblowers who risk their jobs to report wrongdoing." Did top government managers lack flexibility, as well as adequate incentive to perform well? Carter had "established a Senior Executive Corps of 6,000 highly skilled managers who may now transfer among government agencies without loss of rank, and are therefore less likely to abandon public service."

It all sounded very impressive—but did it ultimately make much difference to the performance of the clanking, wheezing federal machine? A look at the evidence four years after Carter's reforms were enacted suggests not.

LET'S start with the problem of incompetence. In the prereform year of 1976, out of 2.5 million federal workers, only 3,500 tenured civil servants were dismissed for poor performance. That's a discharge rate of one seventh of one percent. Of that one seventh of one percent, a substantial number were reinstated after appeals to the courts.

And now that the reforms are in place? The government hasn't retrieved the most recent data from its computers, but in 1980, two years after reform, the number of civil servants fired for poor performance (throwing in for good measure those who resigned under fire) had reached a grand total of . . . um . . . 2,632. That is about one tenth of one percent, a lower percentage than the 1976 prereform figure. At this rate, a firm in the private sector with 1,000 employees would fire only one person a year. Or, putting it another way, a company that had maintained an even payroll of fifty employees since the Declaration of Independence would have dropped only ten for incompetence and other inadequacies in more than two centuries.

In the battle between Jimmy Carter and the bureaucracy's "duds," the duds seem to have triumphed. This is nothing new. They have been gaining ground since 1883, when, following the assassination of President James Garfield by Charles Guiteau, a frustrated office-seeker, the Pendleton Act established a tenured career civil service based on the principle of merit hiring. The Pendleton Act was designed to eliminate the mass political firings that accompanied elections under the spoils system, not to hinder the dismissal of individual incompetents. But in

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the name of merit principles, further restrictions on firing civil servants were legislated in 1912. The Civil Service Commission, delegated with sole responsibility for amending the firing procedures, generated a plethora of such amendments, almost all of which resulted in greater protection for government employees.

Then the judges got into the act. Starting in the late 1950s, they began to allow dismissed federal workers to sue in court to get their jobs back, after their executive branch appeals were exhausted. In 1974 the Supreme Court bought an odd theory popularized by law professor Charles Reich (who also gave us *The Greening of America*), and declared that under the Constitution government employees had a "property right" in their jobs of which they couldn't be deprived without "due process of law." Due process came to mean that every civil servant was entitled to a full-dress trial before an administrative tribunal, followed by an excursion through various layers of federal courts.

These protections were prompted by a laudable concern for fairness to individual workers. But in practice, all this fairness meant that firing a civil servant who really deserved it was a task that only the brave or brash would undertake—and rarely successfully. A highly paid manager might expect to spend 25 to 50 percent of his working days for the better part of two years constructing and defending the paper record required to discharge a single goof-off clerk. In the process, the manager ran the risk of having the clerk file a "grievance" against him, of having to defend himself against the charge, of having *his* superior view *him* as a troublemaker or a bad manager who had a "personality conflict" with his employees.

Small wonder, then, that government bosses learned to handle the problem differently. They palmed off incompetents on unsuspecting fellow managers, who in time did likewise. If an incompetent was of relatively high rank, he might be shipped off to one of the yearlong training courses or study projects known in-house as "turkey farms." In general, managers learned to tolerate unproductive employees, working around them rather than trying to fire them.

THE 1978 reforms were hardly enough to cause a sane supervisor to change these tactics. The Carter changes did eliminate some superfluous stages in the firing process—lawsuits, for example, now go directly to an appeals court without having to pass through the trial-level court first. But Carter didn't come close to testing the limits of the Supreme Court's requirement of "due process." So the supervisor who contemplates firing a federal employee can still anticipate a veritable festival of paperwork and multilevel appeals.

To sack someone in the new, reformed civil service, an agency must first advise the alleged incompetent of his failings, and give him thirty days' notice of its intention to dismiss him. The employee can then take his case to the regional branch of the newly established Merit Systems Protection Board (a four-month process); if the regional branch upholds the firing, the employee can appeal to the MSPB's headquarters in Washington (now thoroughly clogged with about 10,000 appeals from the fired air traffic controllers). If *that* decision goes against him, he can still take his case to a federal appeals court before throwing in the towel.

Not only are the new procedures scant improvement on the old, but in order to get the Carter reforms past the federal unions, concessions had to be made. Federal unions are a peculiar breed. Unable to bargain over "bread and butter" (since federal salaries are set by Congress), they can attract and hold membership only by their aggressive activity on behalf of each employee's "job security." Nor is this zeal tempered—as it often is with private-sector unions—by any fear that their employer might go bankrupt if inefficient work practices are maintained.

What the unions got out of the 1978 reforms was the right to bargain over virtually any change in working conditions. The Department of Transportation in Denver soon discovered that it had no authority to remove a TV set from a "break" room (although there was no contractual obligation to provide one) without consulting the union. The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard learned that it could not require mobile crane operators to keep a lubrication log without negotiating the matter with the union. And the management of a military installation, when making temporary out-of-town assignments, now has to choose the person assigned on the basis of seniority. Even the rearrangement of desks—that central activity of bureaucratic life—can now be the subject of union-management bickering.

IF THE Carter reforms were supposed to make it easier to fire incompetents, they were supposed to make it harder to fire other civil servants—namely, the "whistleblowers" who expose various forms of hanky-panky in their agencies. While compared with European bureaucracies the American civil service is a hotbed of rampant integrity, it has its share of hidden scandals and—more important—scandalously misguided practices that deserve some embarrassing publicity. The archetypal whistleblower is the almost legendary A. Ernest Fitzgerald, the Pentagon official who in 1968 exposed the $2 billion cost overrun on the Lockheed C-5A cargo plane. Fitzgerald's



enhanced standing in the eyes of a grateful government was best expressed by that master of nuance, Richard Nixon, whose response was "Get rid of the son of a bitch!"

Government agencies, for reasons familiar to every student of bureaucracy, do not look kindly on employees who, like Fitzgerald, "commit truth." To protect—even encourage—government employees who speak out, the 1978 reform law set up an independent Office of Special Counsel, endowed with impressive powers. The Special Counsel was to investigate allegations of reprisals against whistleblowers, and then—if the allegations checked out—take the victim's case to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Unfortunately, the new Special Counsel's office has pursued this mission with a zeal that makes Nixon's "personal investigation" of Watergate look like a triumph of dogged prosecution. Since June 1981, the Special Counsel has sought stays of agency action against whistleblowers in a grand total of four cases (in one of which it withdrew its request). It pursued only four allegations of wrongdoing with government agencies, and not once did it use its statutory authority to question the adequacy of an agency's internal investigation of its treatment of a whistleblower. The performance of the office has been so poor that one of its original proponents, Rep. Patricia Schroeder, has introduced legislation to abolish it.

Within the fraternity of whistleblowers and their supporters, in fact, the Office of Special Counsel is regarded as more foe than friend. Veterans like Fitzgerald argue that the office lures bureaucratic dissenters (who might otherwise choose to leak anonymously to the press) into the open with false promises of protection, the better to expose them to their superiors. Fitzgerald characterizes the office as "a sting operation whose purpose is to identify and deal with troublemakers. The whole process is a sham."

In one of its few concrete actions, the Special Counsel's office recently produced a 123-page manual on how to deal with whistleblowers that seems to bear out Fitzgerald's claim. "On the surface the manual's 'guidance' looks innocent enough," says Michael Spekter, a trial attorney with the Office of Special Counsel until he quit in disgust early this year, "but for the sophisticated manager it's a blueprint for getting rid of a whistleblower and making it stick."

The manual suggests several questions (and for each one gives references to court decisions) for a vengeful manager to be guided by. One question, for example, asks, "Was [punitive] action taken close in time to the whistleblowing?" Says Spekter, "To the smart manager that translates: make sure you don't take any reprisal too soon after the whistleblowing; see court decision for how much time should elapse." Another question is "Was there disparate treatment of the whistleblower?" English translation: if you want to pack the whistleblower off to a job where he has no access to information, cloak it with a reorganization that affects several people. The manual also contains samples of letters of dismissal, memos to be put in the file, and pointedly structured performance ratings. Says Spekter, "It's as if the FBI put out instructions telling bank robbers how to avoid tripping the alarm system."

No aspect of the 1978 civil-service reform received more publicity than the creation of the Senior Executive Service. The SES, as it is known, was designed as an elite corps of about 6,000 government managers drawn primarily from the top grades of the permanent civil service. On joining the SES, proponents of this reform implied, government executives would be giving up their secure tenured positions for what President Carter called "the risks and rewards of competitive life." Executives with moxie would be rewarded with sizable bonuses; for those who didn't measure up, it would be the sack.

Beyond rewarding the stars and weeding out the clods, the new system was supposed to give the government a flexibility it never had before—the ability to move executive talent from one agency to another as the need arose. As if to assure skeptics that the new system would indeed frighten off the faint of heart, the head of the program predicted that only 60 percent of those eligible would sign on. The dangers of joining the "high-risk, high-reward" SES were much discussed in the Washington press as the Carter plan worked its way through Congress.

In fact, when the time came, fully 98.8 percent of those eligible signed on. Most of the other 1.2 percent had reached retirement age. This stampede was not the product of a sudden devil-take-the-hindmost spirit infecting the bureaucracy. It simply reflected a hidden truth about SES: while its rewards are quite substantial, its risks are practically nonexistent.

The Senior Executive Service, to be blunt about it, was not the brainchild of Jimmy Carter but a fond hope of the senior executives, who for decades had nurtured plans for being anointed an "elite corps" as a way of acquiring elite salaries. Periodically, the senior elements of the permanent bureaucracy had suggested this "reform" to the task forces or blue-ribbon commissions appointed to study the causes of government inefficiency. It surfaced in the 1949 Hoover Commission as a proposed corps of "Career Business Managers," and six years later—in the Second Hoover Commission—as a "Senior Civil Service," and once again during the Nixon administration as a "Federal Executive Service." It was dusted off, shined up, and sold to Carter as the Senior Executive Service.

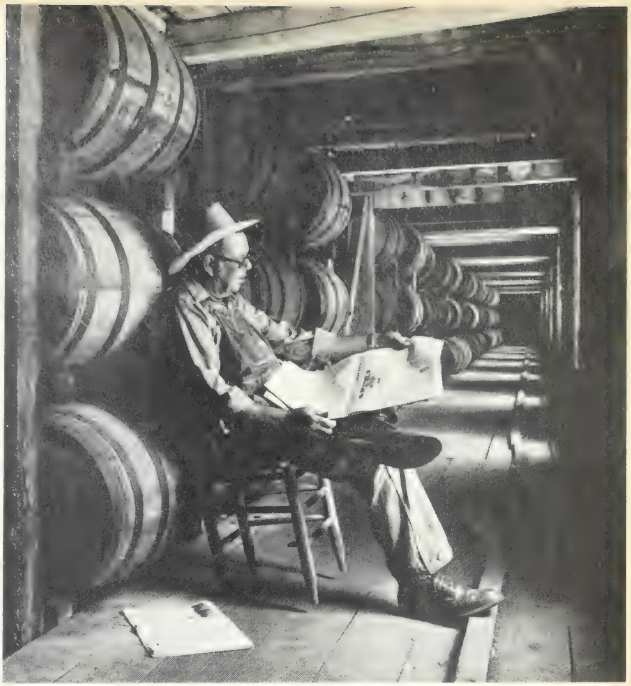
The joy of SES, for the executives, is clear in dollar terms. Although currently held down by an annual $58,500 ceiling, the schedule of SES salaries ranges from $56,945 to $67,200. But the real goodies come in the form of the bonuses. The 1978 reform law provided that bonuses of up to 20 percent could be added to the salaries of senior executives, as

long as not more than half the executives got bonuses in a given year. This might mean that almost every executive could expect a whopping bonus every other year. In 1979, however, after the executives at NASA, the very first agency to award bonuses, indiscreetly distributed checks to 46 percent of their fellow SES men, an embarrassed Congress set a 25 percent limit, later lowered to 20 percent. Beyond these bonuses, the 1978 law allows one percent of career executives to receive $20,000 awards, and another 5 percent to receive $10,000 add-ons.

Do federal executives need this shower of financial rewards? That is certainly the impression assiduously cultivated by federal executives, who argue that underpaid managers are leaving the government in droves every year. But while federal salaries don't soar to the level of top executive salaries in large corporations, many middle-level and senior government managers would be hard-put to match their salaries and benefits outside government. In government they enjoy a job security that many a corporate executive would give his pet ulcer for. They also enjoy a pension system with few parallels in the private sector. A federal executive who retired at fifty-five as recently as seven or eight years ago, after thirty years of service, would now have a pension higher than his salary at the time he left—and in the course of his expectable life will collect more than a million dollars in pension money.

In a poll taken in February 1981, 3,128 SES members said they planned to leave government within two years. Fifteen months later, only 352 SESers had left, not counting retirees. Apparently the vision of higher private-sector salaries failed to materialize.

What of the risks of SES that supposedly go with its substantial rewards? In particular, can an incompetent SES manager be fired? Well . . . sort of. He can be dropped out of the SES—but only back into the regular civil service. Even if that should happen, the statutory



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fine print provides that he shall be "guaranteed a suitable position *at his most recent SES salary or above*." This is not what most people would call a risk. But even this possibility is largely academic: in more than three years of operation, out of the 6,200 career members of SES, exactly one has been dropped for poor performance. Risk?

CONTRARY to the assumption underlying the SES idea, the main problem in government is not lazy executives who must be motivated by the promise of higher pay. In my experience, at least, senior government executives are as smart and energetic as their private-industry counterparts. The problem is the way they expend their energy, which is largely on bureaucratic dynamics —turf battles and lobbying for higher budgets—rather than in serving the broader public.

This is why one of the most sensible ideas included in the original SES plan would have allowed executives to be shifted to jobs outside their agencies, a reform that would have broken the link that ties an executive's own prosperity to his agency's expansion. He could even abolish his agency, if required, and look forward to another assignment when the job was done. Unfortunately, the career executives prevailed on Congress to drop this provision from the 1978 law. Today, no member of SES may be involuntarily transferred out of his own agency.

Instead, the SES often reinforces the worst sort of bureaucratic self-interest. A good example comes from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where two of the three "critical elements" established for judging whether an executive deserves a bonus read as follows: "Decisions rarely, if ever, questioned by client groups"; "Decisions consistently praised by affected groups." "Client groups," of course, are interest groups that benefit from one or more of an agency's programs. They have their members to look after, but the public servant's task is not necessarily to make their job easier. But HUD and other government agencies get valuable support from these lobbies, and from the congressional committees that are also responsive to them. So the HUD official who bucks the construction lobby instead of cultivating it is not likely to be the one who finds a bonus in his stocking.

RONALD Reagan's contribution to reform of the bureaucracy has been the "RIF"—Washington jargon for "reduction in force." The size of the Reagan RIF has been in no way proportionate to the publicity it has received, or to the panic and indignation it has caused in the ranks. Some 9,600 people have so far been dropped—approximately one of every 260 civil servants. That is hardly on a scale that would strike the citizens of, say, Flint, Michigan, as catastrophic. But in a city like Washington, where the government is sometimes considered to exist for the purpose of providing jobs for civil servants, the outcry was horrendous.

The real tragedy of the Reagan RIF, however, was that it missed a rare opportunity to weed out the least productive members of the federal force. RIF procedures practically guarantee that any attempt to lay off bureaucrats will further decrease government efficiency—something Carter's reforms did nothing to change. In a RIF, seniority is everything; competence hardly enters into the equation. Somebody whose job is eliminated may "bump" a less senior fellow worker in the same or lower grade out of *his* job; the bumpee, in turn, may bump someone else, etc., until eventually the last bumpee is slid out the door. For every worker eventually laid off, three or four are displaced in this process.

The results are sometimes startling. At the Railroad Retirement Board in Chicago, a doctor whose job was abolished wound up accepting a job as a clerk. At the Office of Personnel Management, a former GS-14 psychologist is, as of this writing, working as a GS-3 in the mailroom. Several public health analysts (GS-14) at the U.S. Public Health Service ended up as secretaries (GS-5), jobs they can probably be expected to louse up thoroughly. For at least two years all of these downwardly mobile professionals will retain their original salaries (at or close to $50,000 a year), thus assuring the government of a prestige clerical force.

The Reagan administration, currently contemplating further RIFs, has toyed with the idea of changing the rules to make performance on the job the primary criterion for the retention of workers. But faced with the opposition of the federal unions, which are devoted to seniority systems, the effort has already been abandoned, at least for this year. James R. Rosa, the general counsel of the American Federation of Government Employees, says that if the administration ever does try to change the rules without getting Congress to pass a new law, the union will take it to court. If the administration tries for a new law, the union will bring its muscle to bear in Congress, as it did against Jimmy Carter.

IT IS possible to reform the bureaucracy. There is nothing inherent in government that prevents the performance of those who run it from being judged, that precludes breaking the career ties between senior executives and their agencies, or that requires whistleblowers to be punished. Nor is it clear why the federal civil servant must be afforded extravagant protections against being erroneously fired that his counterparts in the private sector do not enjoy. Even the decisions of the Supreme Court on government employees' "property" rights are vague enough to be challenged by a determined president. But on the unglamorous issue of civil-service reform, Jimmy Carter was about as determined a president as we are likely to get for a long time. If he didn't change much —and he didn't—who will? ■



Poster issued by the Japanese Federation of Farmers' Cooperatives, in defense of the Japanese way of life.

the YELLOW PERIL and the RED HAIRED DEVILS

by Murray Sayle

One is big, broad, and bossy, the other is small, skinny, and works too hard. They have continual spats, mostly about money, brief flare-ups, short-lived reconciliations. The oddest couple on the international scene needs some marriage counseling.

AMBASSADOR Mike J. Mansfield never fails to get a round of applause from sober-suited Japanese businessmen when he calls it the most important relationship either country has. Ambassadors, of course, often talk like that. If true, such propositions would make all of them the most important ambassador. But the former Senate majority leader speaks from a very long personal association with Japan, going all the way back to December 1944, when he was supervising saturation bombing of the country from air force bases on mainland China.

Still, few of Mansfield's Japanese listeners hold this against him. The leveling of Japan's major cities by fire and atom, and the subsequent ignominious surrender, turned out to be one of those heavily disguised blessings Japanese history so often records. The conqueror has gone on to become Japan's big-

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gest market by far. Put simply, the $50 billion or so Japan earns in the U.S. every year just about pays for the oil that keeps Japanese industry turning, Japanese houses warm, and life pleasant or even possible for the 117 million people jammed into the Japanese home islands. The U.S. is, knowingly or not, the source of nearly all the advanced technology Japan sells around the world, especially back to the U.S. America is the only guarantor of Japan's defense. Without the custom and cooperation of Americans, glad or grudging, Japan, Inc. would be out of business.

But the other way round? Although the trade is heavily tilted in Japan's favor (a $16 billion trade surplus last year, and talk of a $20 billion gap this year), Japan is still America's biggest overseas national market, buying mostly food, fuel, and raw materials. The Japanese islands provide bases for 45,000 scattered, poorly (by current Japanese standards) paid American troops. Japanese are widely believed to be fervent, if unpredictable, admirers of The American Way. They are known to love baseball, for instance, and the Beach Boys. And offering the sincerest flattery of all, imitation, the Japanese are now American industry's most dangerous rivals, both in the U.S. home market and throughout the world, their market shares everywhere growing faster than the Reagan-ridden world economy itself.

At this point, if I am reading the symptoms correctly, a corrosive doubt is beginning to form, especially in American minds. For most of the years since 1945, the thought of an Oriental microchip off the old block, a Little Orphan Japannie and Daddy Bigbucks, a dependant, and therefore a staunch ally out in the turbulent East, was one that Americans found comforting. Here was one erring society, at least, that had been taken in hand successfully by American generals and remolded closer to the ideas of Tom Jefferson, Henry Ford, and FDR; whose natives had proved suitably grateful to their five-star teacher and had signed on eagerly for perpetual alliance and admiration.

But is Japan really an ally? When Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki tried to use the word "alliance" (*dōmei* in Japanese) on a visit to Washington last year, there was uproar back home. Japan's unprofitable *dōmei* with Hitler and Mussolini, 1940–1945, was dragged up in the Japanese press, and Suzuki hastily withdrew the term. Japan is still spending under one percent of its bloated GNP on defense, proportionately less than a fifth of the American, or even the British, effort in the common cause. John Foster Dulles called for a Japanese army of 300,000 men in 1951, yet thirty years later Japan still cannot fully field thirteen full divisions, 180,000 men, to defend her own islands, let alone give a hand in cowing the Russians. The pink Chinese, in contrast, have 2.5 million troops available to lean on the far eastern borders of the Soviet Union. Which, on this count, is the more attractive ally?



JAPAN'S irritating and incomprehensible military reticence may still be preferable to the excessive zeal of forty years ago. More alarming, for American self-confidence, are the developments on the economic and industrial fronts. For years the Japanese were viewed as a nation of clever copyists, wallowing in docile labor and oil at three dollars a barrel, fair-weather blossoms sure to fall when the economic winds turned bitter. Then they survived the first oil crisis creditably, and the second one even better, mysteriously able to turn a forty-dollar barrel of oil into more exports than anyone else, even the masterful West Germans.

The Reagan blizzard has left them in even better shape. Japanese unemployment is running at 2.2 percent, less than a quarter the American rate. No dying industrial towns infested with idle youth in Japan, no street crime, no South Bronxes or downtown Detroits. Workers in the major Japanese export industries are approaching American wage levels, and they are busy as bees keeping the cars, computers, and TV sets flowing down to the docks.

Furthermore, being too busy to read the American business press, they seem to be quite unaware that they are regimented, downtrodden, and brainwashed, their individuality sapped by singing the company song and their manhood (and womanhood) betrayed by bowing low to the picture of the company president. They are drudges infuriatingly happy in their drudgery.

Some American thinkers have ascribed all this to a mysterious Japanese "management system," an Oriental art that makes people content with long hours, low pay, and obeying orders with robotlike reliability. Here, we are told, is something we can learn from the Japanese, showing in the process how large-minded and free from racial prejudice we are. The manager who follows Theory Z, we learn, will soon have American workers singing the company song, working unpaid overtime, and turning out zero-defect merchandise, thus putting both customers and stockholders in hog heaven.

Meanwhile, though, the Japanese are climbing higher and higher up the technological ladder, especially in fields like electronics and computers, where Americans believed (as with the atom bomb, long ago) that they had an unassailable lead. In what is still the basic symbol of American industrial virility, the automobile, foreign cars now have 30 percent of the market, and most of them (look out the window) are Japanese. Great as the Japanese success has been, it might be even greater: far from flooding in, uncounted and unchecked, some 70 percent of Japanese exports to the U.S. are already subject to some form of "voluntary" restriction, "gentleman's agreement," or other interference in the free market that Americans hold so self-evidently desirable.

This is starting to get, well, scary. The sorcerer's

apprentice is turning into the wicked witch. No one has ever challenged American industrial might before. If the Russians were building competitive computers, instead of tanks, the world scene would look a lot gloomier than it does. Are the Japanese behaving as a good ally, or loyal pal, or reliable sidekick, or whatever they are supposed to be?

Now, come to think of it—and here the suspicions swarm thick as bats—how is it that there is only one major industrial power that is not Western, white, and Christian in background? And why is it not the cultured and scientific Chinese, but rather the secretive offshore islanders who spent most of their history as remote and isolated as Tibet is now? Why is there only one developing country that ever developed, at least to the point of challenging the world, first militarily, then industrially? Is there some connection we don't know about between Japan's violent past, supposedly buried forever, and her peaceful present? Are today's Japanese on the same familiar track, militarists in drag? Has kindly old Uncle Sam, the King Lear of the nuclear age, all unknowingly created a monster of ingratitude?

Before paranoia takes over completely we need, I think, to dwell a moment on the obvious, namely that the parties to the Pacific partnership understand each other very poorly. The courtship was not, for a start, a slow getting-to-know-you, but rather a matter of bombs away, from Diamond Head to Nagasaki Bay. Much as the Japanese have learned from Americans, they did not exactly invite them in to give lessons. Hostility, latent and not so latent, is to be expected on both sides.

Yet the mutual importance is far more than just a matter of doing big, lopsided business together. The first foreign army to put a boot on Japanese soil in 2,000 years has a permanent place in Japanese history, and the first ever serious challenger to American industrial supremacy ought to have one in yours, dear American reader. The relationship clearly has a long way to go, and our case notes might well begin with a sketch of the—at least up to now—dominant partner.

THE NATURE, and purpose, of American society continues to be something of a mystery to Japanese. During the Pacific war they were fighting a group called "devil English-Americans," who spoke the same language, more or less, and who had once, even more confusingly, been the same people. As anyone who looks Japanese and speaks Japanese is, to Japanese, a compatriot (and anyone who fails either of these tests can never be), the idea of a multiethnic nation is one that passes easy understanding. America looks to the Japanese like a club that anyone can join, a Boy Scout movement that issues passports.

So, in recent years, the Americans who have come to Tokyo to cajole, threaten, and preach to the Japanese have included persons of German, Italian, Armenian, African, and many other ethnic provenances, as well as, of course, Anglo-Saxons like the genial bomb-aiming ambassador. No Japanese-American has yet turned up to rebuke his former compatriots on their business methods, just as none of the famous Nisei Division of the U.S. Army were sent to fight in the Pacific, but this ultimate oddity (from a Japanese viewpoint) is probably only a matter of time.

What, then, is an American, beyond being someone with an eagle on his passport? To the best of Japanese understanding, speaking English helps, although it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition. More to the point, Americans are people who have given their assent to certain principles: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the latter widely taken in Japan to mean access to Japanese consumer products. This is, perhaps, not too far off the mark: after all, with one notable exception, the United States is made up of immigrant groups who went there to better themselves, a process almost always interpreted as getting possession of the goods of this world, by honest toil if no quicker way is available.

In this the United States has certainly been shaped by its inheritance from the first English-speaking superpower, along with a touching confidence in the virtues of the free market and capitalist democracy. There is, therefore, something to the Japanese



MacArthur and Hirohito: a famous meeting in Tokyo, 1946. Problem: which one is God?

theory of the devil English-Americans. Between them the English-speakers created the industrial revolution and with its aid dominated the world, a superiority confirmed in 1945 by their great victory over all rival political and economic systems. (For the sake of tidiness we forget the Russians, who came to exactly the opposite conclusion.) We thought the Japanese got the message at Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and points nearby, but they seem to be abusing our confidence by not consuming as much as or more than they can afford; and hence the strain in our relationship, doctor.

A brutally foreshortened view of the American experience, perhaps, but enough, I think, for our therapeutic purposes. Next, nurse, the Japanese. There may be no genuine races of men, but the Japanese, a mixture of peoples closely related in the first place, and all but closed to foreign additions for several thousand years, come as close to a *Volk* as we are likely to get on this planet. Certainly a lot closer than the Germans ever have (the true Aryan, as they say, is as blond as Hitler, as slim as Goering, and as straight as Goebbels).



THE JAPANESE view of themselves, and thus of other people as well, is one that anyone else (and especially Americans) would call downright, one hundred percent racist. The Japanese nation is, in principle, just one huge extended family, all, to the last Suzuki or Watanabe, descended from the Sun Goddess. The special position of Emperor Hirohito comes simply from the legend that he is descended, eldest son to eldest son, directly from the goddess, and not through one of the innumerable collateral branches. By Japanese notions, prayers to an ancestor or ancestress are the more effective the straighter they go up the family tree. Hirohito is, in fact, descended, with many adoptions and, inevitably, wrong-side-of-the-*futon* connections, from the nameless family that ruled the Yamato tribe, founder of the first Japanese state somewhere before 400 A.D. So he certainly has the longest attested pedigree of any living human being, and an irreplaceable role in the Japanese scheme of things.

All Japanese organization is, therefore, based in some way or another on the Japanese family, on real or assumed ties of blood. Everyone is in the family, but some are further inside than others, just as our own families radiate out from spouses and siblings to kissin' cousins and the outer penumbras of three, four, and five times removeds. So a Japanese airline, a baseball team, or a political faction are all *ie*—"households" (expressed in Japanese by the graphic Chinese character of a pig under a roof) —with the same hierarchy we find in any real family, the same common family history, the same claim on loyalty, the same automatic and inescapable commitment for life and beyond. Japan itself is just a family of families, *ware-ware Nihonjin*, "we Japanese," a family that can only be entered by birth—and never left, at least this side of Nirvana.

This doctrine is certainly racist by our standards, but it is not a doctrine taught to the Japanese by any forelocked cryptorchid housepainter or Oriental equivalent. It does not divide bad, arrogant Japanese from the good, humanistic, brotherly-love kind. It is not an issue in Japanese politics. It does, of course, enable insecure, nationalistic Japanese to claim that they are the master race, and behave insufferably toward people who, not being Japanese, are therefore inferior and not really human. ("Treat a stranger as a thief," as the old Japanese saying advises.) It also moves humanistic Japanese (the film director Akira Kurosawa is an excellent example) to take a *noblesse oblige* attitude, a lofty pride in their heritage that, they feel, should be communicated for the benefit of the whole human race, an exquisite courtesy and kindness toward foreigners designed to show that Japanese are, indeed, superior people. But, either way, the idea that the Japanese are one big, more or less happy family is not a political doctrine. It is, to Japanese, just the way things are.

A first consequence is Japanese notions of citizenship. I have, for instance, two children, both born in the tiny one-doctor hospital in our village, where my wife (English) has never had anything but kindness and care of the very highest order. Our small son attends the local village school and does his studies in Japanese, with English as a side subject, and our daughter will do the same. Both have had from birth devoted Japanese "uncles," "aunts," and "cousins," our neighbors, with whom they spend a lot of their happiest hours.

Yet neither of our children has or can ever have a claim on Japanese citizenship, either in Japanese law or in Japanese outlook. They had, in fact, sixty days after birth in which to explain on an appropriate form what they were doing in Japan and how they entered the country without a visa. They now have the papers appropriate to an accredited foreign correspondent, and if and when I cease to be one, their time in Japan is up and out they must go. My Japanese neighbors find this sad, but entirely as it should be; children with blue eyes and blond hair, which Japanese find irresistible and call *kewpie-chan*, are cute. But they are not Japanese, are they?

A second consequence of Japanese attitudes about race and nation comes into play in the rare periods (we are in one now) when Japan has had relations of any sort with foreign countries. If Japan is a family, then the other nations must be a family of families with, as ever, some nearer the center than others. Ever since they found out about its existence, Japan has longed to join the charmed circle of white industrial nations that, between occasional tiffs, clearly run the world. The attempt to bar Japan from

the fireside in the 1930s led straight to the Pacific war; the photos of Japanese prime ministers at international economic conferences, not waiting at table but sitting right in there with the rest of the family, do wonders for Japanese national pride. But the international order is still a family—not that odd Western notion, a free association of equals. Families are hierarchies; they have a head (currently Uncle Sam), they have younger sons who need special help, like Japan, and siblings who try to sneak a bigger-than-fair share of parental indulgence, like Europe. And hearing that at the last economic summit, in Versailles, everyone but Prime Minister Suzuki spoke English, and seeing that he barely stood as high as Mrs. Thatcher's *poitrine*, let alone Mr. Reagan's gunbelt, the Japanese felt again the nagging, lingering suspicion that Japan is only there on sufferance, not really a member of the family, and that, if the going gets rough, Japanese are better off with people they know and trust, their kin, other Japanese.

A third and most important consequence of Japan conceived as a family is, curiously enough, economic. No problem in persuading Japanese workers to keep their wage demands in line with increases in productivity, in the family interest, and hence, by world standards, no inflation to speak of. Immense resistance to letting control of a Japanese company pass into foreign hands—would you sell your sister? No difficulty in protecting hopelessly inefficient Japanese farmers from the competition of low-cost American agriculture, because the integrity of the Japanese community, meaning harmony inside the Japanese family and a dignified life for country cousins, is more important than gorging on cheap foreign beef, oranges, and rice. Japan must have the only consumer movement in the world that regularly demands that low-cost foreign producers of any kind be kept out.

Being Japanese is therefore not a commitment to any set of political rights or principles, always excepting Japan-as-a-family. Capitalism, communism, militarism, fascism, pacifism, dictatorship, democracy, all are equally feasible (often in rapid, bewildering succession), as long as they are done the Japanese way. On the other hand, the Japanese system cannot tolerate more than marginal unemployment (currently less than a quarter of the American level), because the family owes everyone at least a chance to contribute to the family rice bowl.



THE CELEBRATED Japanese management system, Theory Z, if it ever existed, was brought to Japan some 15,000 years ago, when the culture of irrigated rice arrived in slow stages around the coast of Asia from Thailand, its original home. By rights rice, a tropical crop, should do poorly in Japan, which is a chain of rocky volcanic islands off the coast of Siberia. But the monsoon weather system reverses in the summer, and for three months Japan is in the tropics, good for rice and, these days, the air-conditioner business. Flat land is scarce (only 16 percent of the land surface, and the country is already smaller than the state of California), but by centuries of labor the Japanese have carved out enough terraces in the long, narrow valleys that seam the Japanese mountains to feed themselves, and to accumulate a huge, politically motivated rice surplus from one of the most vote-intensive agricultural regions in the world.

There is no such thing as a solitary, independent, pioneering wet-rice farmer. Growing rice calls for intense teamwork in the short, backbreaking seasons of planting, transplanting, and harvest. In good years rice is an abundant crop, well able to support the farmers who grow it and a nonfarming ruling class as well—in Japan's case the famous military caste, the samurai, who amounted to a sixth of the population in their most parasitic period. But rice is everywhere a chancy crop, liable to total failure every decade or so, and nowhere more so than in Japan, which is visited by typhoons with torrential rains and floods every summer (one went over my house in September), as well as earthquakes, tidal waves, and even droughts—practically the entire arsenal of Nature's character-builders, at dismally regular intervals.

Rice-based civilizations, therefore, tend to have well-marked social attitudes, and Japan is an extreme case. Rice farmers are normally able and willing to part with a good proportion of their crop to anyone rich and powerful enough to look after them when the crop fails. Rice growers work consummately well in groups, and see nothing wrong with group reward and group punishment, which is exactly what the crop does to them, by punishing everyone for one family's failure, for example, to keep their part of the irrigation system in good repair. Rice farmers value security above opportunity. They have little use for individualists and a deep, ingrown respect for, and dependence on, constituted authority.

In all these respects Japanese are at one end of the human scale, Americans at the extreme other end. ("The nail that sticks up will be hammered down," says an old Japanese proverb. "Take this job and shove it," says Johnny Paycheck.) An American shows his manliness by riding off alone into the sunset; a Japanese by how closely he can conform to the group, how hard he can work in the common effort. The spirit that tamed the West may have spurred some of the early stages of the industrial revolution, but for repetitive, zero-defect work in factories, for the ability to operate in groups that function like machines, the spirit that built the East is incomparably the better buy.

Rice farming, on the whole, tends not to produce individual thinkers, although it is clearly an excel-

lent preparation for mass-producing motorbikes. But the Japanese have a long cultural tradition, and in recent years they seem set fair to scale the highest cliffs of modern technology. Who, if not the rice farmers, has been doing the thinking for them?

For nearly 2,000 years, Japan had a light to steer by. Invisible over the Yellow Sea lay the perfect civilization, its secrets available, free, to any visitor. Anything worth knowing the Chinese already knew. Japanese progress in the arts, science, and technology was a simple matter of dipping into the inexhaustible Chinese stock and, where necessary, making small improvements—like using barley in soy sauce (which even the Chinese now prefer), or inventing a folding paper lantern, to prevent your Chinese-developed candle from blowing out on a rainy Tokyo night.

There has been a psychological price to pay for the years of dependence. Japan has never needed innovators, at least not up to now, and hence has never prized or rewarded them. Never quite able to match the latest out of China, the Japanese cringe still under an abiding sense of cultural inferiority, relieved, like all barbarian outsiders similarly placed, by the assertion that they are actually superior in the barbarous virtues of ferocity, persistence, and will. They have, as a people, a constant need to prove themselves, often by attempting the impossible, like world conquest, or the rather difficult, like overtaking America's technological lead. The Chinese, serene in their superiority, see no need for any such foolishness. But then, inexplicably, the Chinese faded, and Japan began to look with interest at the Anglo-Saxons, roughnecks like themselves, from the outer edges of Latin civilization, who had somehow managed to throw down their Chinese idols.

The disillusion with China led to three determined invasions by the Japanese—one, in 1944, almost successful. This has left the Chinese ambivalent, to say the least, about their energetic neighbors, whom they used to call "the monkey thieves" (from a legend that the Japanese were descended from a Chinese princess stolen by a monkey, thus explaining the similarities, and baffling differences, between the two cultures). It left Japanese civilization the mishmash it is today, of foreign ideas sometimes perfectly mastered, often distorted and travestied beyond recognition, with hardly one really original contribution of their own. The Japanese addition to the general stock of human knowledge has indeed been modest. Japanese thinkers are little known outside their own country, mostly for good reason. Japanese are fast learners-by-heart, shameless imitators, as the insecure and unself-confident usually are. But at sizing up a rival civilization with a coldly practical eye, at gutting its useful ideas, at adapting, combining, and improving foreign achievements and assembling the resources to duplicate or surpass them, they are the cleverest people in the world.



SETTING rice farmers to work in factories on foreign ideas is part of the story. But who directs their labors? Here we need a brief look at the most formative phase of Japanese history (before the 1940s), the period that roughly corresponds to an equally momentous one in Europe, the reign of Elizabeth I of England.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of our era, the Japanese engaged in nonstop civil war, along the lines of Indochina in the past thirty years but extended over two and a half centuries, with mountain ambushes, burning towns, and every imaginable kind of brutality, heroism, and betrayal. The slaughter was finally stopped by a common soldier turned general, one Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a "base-born, monkey-faced adventurer" in Japanese historiography, and actually a physically unprepossessing but able boss of the type that Japanese history turns up from time to time, usually when things are falling to pieces (Soichiro Honda, head of the famous motor company, is a good example from our own time).

Hideyoshi's army of professional warriors, the samurai (from a root word meaning "men of service"), managed to defeat all the others and bring Japan its first precarious taste of peace in centuries. Like many a peacemaker before and after him, Hideyoshi sought to seal his success with a foreign adventure and set off to conquer China via Korea, with an army of 300,000 picked, bloodthirsty samurai swordsmen, a visit the Korean people have neither forgotten nor forgiven to this day. The Chinese intervened against Hideyoshi on the Yalu River, as they did against another overconfident conqueror 350 years later. Then a Korean admiral sank his fleet, and that was the end of Japan's first attempt at world dominion.

Hideyoshi failed to found a dynasty, but a successor, Tokugawa Ieyasu, set himself up as Sei-i Tai Shōgun, or "Great Barbarian-Conquering General," founding a line of hereditary military dictators who ruled Japan in the name of a remote and powerless emperor until 1868. Tokugawa's first problem was the immense class of military men, now redundant, who had fought in the civil wars. His solution was to confirm them as the sole bearers of arms, and put them all on the payroll with a yearly salary, calculated in rice, for their support. The samurai continued to tell war stories, to collect swords, to buy ever more ornate suits of armor, to perform military exercises every morning, and to pretend that they were still soldiers. But in fact they did no fighting of any kind (apart from very occasionally massacring Japanese Christians) for 250-odd years, one of the longest periods of total peace any warrior nation has ever known.

How, for nonfighting samurai, did the day go? They became bureaucrats, and, little by little, as the need for conspicuous consumption swallowed up their fixed incomes, businessmen. For instance, the

Sumitomo combine, one of the biggest in Japan, began as a clan that owned a copper mine. The oldest department store in the world, Mitsukoshi in Tokyo, was started in 1610 by a samurai named Hachirobei Mitsui, who, short of cash, pawned his two swords and opened a business selling ribbons and kimonos, proceeding that filled his brother warriors with inexpressible contempt until they saw how much money he was making. To this day Sumitomo uses the clan crest, four slabs of copper, as the trademark of its business, while the familiar wellhead crest of the Mitsui clan is still the logo of the Mitsui conglomerate, one of the biggest in the world.

The titles used in Japanese business, corresponding to our own clumsy managing director, deputy assistant general manager, and the like, are neat, short, and precise—*bucho*, *kacho*, and so on. They are in fact the ranks used in the samurai armies of the Japanese clans, now companies, and they indicate a chain of command, basically military in its origins, which has been honed and perfected over centuries. Instead of the endless redrawing of organization charts that occupies so much time in the West, the Japanese company man knows exactly who he reports to, and who reports to him. We in the West used to have a system of social organization just as neat and orderly, when serfs reported to knights, who served under barons, all the lines of responsibility leading to the king and his counselors; but we lost ours somewhere on the way to the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution. Japan never had a homegrown Enlightenment.

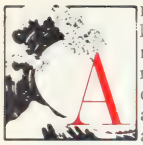
The samurai were officially abolished, and lost their state-paid salaries, in 1873. By that time many of them were in business, and the rest soon followed. You can see them any day in Tokyo, still wearing their sober suits (Western-style, now) with a company badge instead of the clan crest on their lapel, a briefcase instead of a sword under their arm, and a code of honor, discipline, and service that has not changed in centuries. The Japanese samurai turned company executive still gets drunk every Friday night; he continues, in many cases, to beat his wife when he thinks she needs it, he continues to be promoted by length of service, not ability, he continues to work all the hours Buddha sends, and he still regards his job as a commitment for life, on both sides, in which his own self-esteem and the success of his company are inextricably bound together.

Singing the company song and bowing to the picture of the company president seem to us Westerners unmanly in an employee who is only supposed to be selling his labor on the principle of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. But when the United States Marines sing *their* company song and salute their president, we know that at least some part of the defense budget is being well spent. Marines ask for no overtime, they regard instant obedience and smart turnout as an essential part of the job, and they show that they have balls by their devotion to the squad, platoon, or company—just like a good Toyota man, in fact. Japanese employees, in short, do not regard themselves as exploited drudges, or their devotion to company matters as in any way demeaning or unmanly. They see themselves as dedicated military men from a famous warrior nation, showing what it can do in the civilian field.

Japanese business journalism never tires of the military theme. Markets are invaded, bridgeheads secured, major offensives launched. Junior executives are sent for two or three weeks' training with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (as are the stewardesses of Japan Air Lines) to sharpen up on discipline. Young company men are encouraged to take up martial arts or practice Zen meditation, exactly the way their ancestors concentrated their fighting spirits before battle. Japanese inspirational literature, a highly developed art form, is full of stories of business bravery. An example I read recently, for instance, told of a Japanese bicycle salesman found frozen to death in a remote pass of the Andes, his merchandise over his shoulder, his face turned toward a market as yet unpenetrated by the advance guard of Japanese industry. This strikes Westerners as nutty (in a business context, of course—there would probably be a Medal of Honor in it if there were any VC about), but Japanese businessmen find such stories profoundly moving. Not surprisingly, the samurai legacy has given Japan the most dependable, diligent middle management in the world.



Learning mass production: schoolgirls work on the war effort, Tokyo, 1946.



RANK and file of rice farmers, eagerly cooperating, an officer corps or middle management of former samurai with an ethic of loyalty unto death. All the Japanese need, for an all-conquering industrial army, is an economic general staff, and this indeed they have. The central directorate of the Japanese economy—the notorious MITI (Ministry for International Trade and Industry)—is a development of Japan's lost war that again owes nothing to American influence (except that Americans helped put Japan's real army out of business, and thus turned the nation's immense energies to the more profitable paths of peace). To get this story we must, again, look briefly down the corridor of Japan's stormy past.

The opening of Japan after centuries of isolation is generally credited to American gunboat businessman Commodore Matthew Perry, who anchored near Edo, now Tokyo, in 1853, aimed his cannon at the town, and ordered the Japanese to start trading or else—a piece of bravado some Americans may now regret. Actually, the shōguns were about to fall anyway when the commodore made his move, for reasons both internal (the samurai class were bankrupt and mutinous) and external, the most important element here being the humiliating defeat of China by Britain in the infamous Opium Wars. The collapse of revered China shook Japan's self-confidence as nothing had in centuries. Japan, it seemed, was probably next on the list for European colonization, with compulsory opium smoking (the Japanese have a horror of drug users to this day, as Beatle Paul McCartney discovered) and the attendant destruction of their Japaneseness, their sovereignty, the things Japanese still prize above life itself.

The Shōgun's men paid due attention to the commodore's arguments, but it was the British bombardment of Kagoshima in the southern island of Kyushu, the first time Japanese had seen Western firepower in action, that made believers out of the most go-ahead clans in the country. The Satsumas of Kagoshima, and their neighbors the Choshu clan of Honshu, defied the Shōgun's ban on trade and purchased heavy weapons from a Scottish gunrunner named Thomas Glover, later using them to overthrow the Shōgun himself and set themselves up as a military oligarchy with the boy-emperor Meiji as front-man, or front-god.

The navy, the supreme technological arm of the time, claimed the first attention of the new regime, whose aim was to use modern, foreign-invented weapons to keep the foreigners out of the sacred land of the gods. By 1903 Japanese government shipyards were turning out exact copies of British destroyers—a decade later, state-of-the-art battleships. The Zero fighter of 1938 was the first military aircraft ever built in Japan, perhaps the most dazzling industrial debut in history. The Yamato of 1940 was the biggest and most advanced battleship of all time, a true world-beater, except that, unknown to the Japanese or anyone else, battleships were already the wave of the past. In short, Japan was already close to world leadership in some industries half a century ago.

The First World War was a war to Japan's taste, a clue to her preferred role in the Third. For combat losses of less than a hundred men, Japan got a seat at the victor's table, the former German colonies and concessions in China and the Pacific, and orders for the first exports of radios, typewriters, Western-style tableware, and many other portents of the future. The Twenties were a prosperous time when Western ideas flooded into Japan, baseball became all the rage, Japanese flappers, called *mogo* (modern girls), wore cloche hats and bugle beads, and all-purpose radicals, derided as "Marxboys," protested the sinister spread of Japanese capitalism.

Japan was, in short, developing along lines much more Western than those today. Politics, too, were coming to resemble the American pattern, with two conservative parties vying for office on "sweep the rascals out" policies (they are now fused in the fossilized Liberal Democratic oligarchy that has ruled Japan for the past thirty-five years). This was also the time when Japan was most open to outside political and social ideas.



THE FIRST great depression put a stop to all that. It hit Japan, already heavily dependent on world trade, with particular force. There was widespread hunger in country districts, previously prospering on Japan's monopoly in silk for stockings, and many a young army officer got word that his sisters had been sold into the brothels of Tokyo or Osaka to keep the family eating. Japanese businessmen, never greatly admired in a culture that traditionally despises merchants, got the blame, and many were assassinated by right-wing zealots or junior army officers. The families that had once controlled the big Japanese conglomerates like Mitsui and Mitsubishi disappeared hastily from the scene, never to return.

In 1931 the Japanese Army set up a puppet state in the Chinese province of Manchuria. They called it Manchukuo. Faced with a hearts and minds problem—30 million hostile Chinese—Gen. Hideki Tojo, head of the Kempei-Tai, the local equivalent of the Gestapo (later military governor, later prime minister of Japan, hanged as a war criminal in 1949), saw that he needed fast economic development. Manchukuo had resources but no industry. In a flash of inspiration Tojo sent for a group of young finance bureaucrats from Tokyo headed by the brightest of the bright, Nobusuke Kishi, soon to be effec-

tive head of the Department of Industry of the government of Manchukuo (later Japan's wartime munitions minister, war criminal "suspect" 1945–49, prime minister of Japan 1957–60, "one of the finest leaders the Free World has produced," according to Lyndon Johnson, and today, at eighty-six, still a power in Japanese right-wing politics and president of the Japan-American Society).

Kishi and Co. pulled off a genuine economic miracle in Manchukuo, the only one the 1930s had to show, and deserving of far more study than it has had. Manchukuo was, in turn, the model for the Japanese economic miracle proper, which seems set to perform the trick again in the 1980s. Yet the bleak economic climate of the 1930s, like our own, could hardly have seemed a less propitious time. No foreign government would recognize Manchukuo, no foreigner would invest there, and the army hated the idea of the big Japanese companies meddling in their new conquest. So Kishi, with Tojo's encouragement, set up the army's own conglomerate, Nissan, forerunner of Datsun, under his uncle, one Gensuke Aikawa, a bankrupt textile tycoon.

Only by courtesy (if it is courteous) could Manchukuo's economics be described as capitalist. Operating capital was simply created by the army-controlled banks, thus eliminating capitalists, with their tiresome demands for dividends. In an uncontrolled market, total bank finance is the high road to disaster (if sales slump, how can the loans be repaid?), but with market shares guaranteed by the government, there is no risk. As general war in Asia came closer, Nissan and Manchukuo prospered on endless army orders for trucks, tanks, and guns.

In 1937, the Japanese army crossed the Great Wall into China proper and the Manchurian Incident became, in Japanese euphemism, the China Incident, with at first a dazzling string of victories, then stubborn Chinese resistance that the Japanese could neither end nor ignore. In 1941 Tojo and his acolyte Kishi came back to Japan, Tojo to be the prime minister who brought us Pearl Harbor, Kishi to reorganize Japanese industry for the total war that followed, along lines pioneered in Manchuria.

So in December 1941 Japan extended its China war to the Pacific, challenged the U.S. to its first battle of production, and lost. In the beginning, Japan's weapons were as modern as her opponents', although little of the basic technology was Japanese —the Zero fighter was largely designed by an Englishman, the Yamato class of battleships owed a lot, in construction techniques, to the *Queen Mary* and other giant liners of the north Atlantic. But the Japanese were fighting opponents ready and able to put more into R & D than they were, even while the war progressed. Japanese radar never worked very well, and the total budget allotted for Japan's atomic bomb (actually two, rival projects by the army and navy) was only $400,000, while the Manhattan Project cost a staggering (for the times) $2 billion.

The Japanese scarcely improved on the military technology with which they went to war, while at Los Alamos their opponents made the biggest breakthrough of the age. The Japanese compensation was, as ever, the barbarians' recourse to will. Observing hostile fleets approaching their sacred islands, the Tokyo High Command correctly assumed that smart bombs, increasing the hit ratio, were the answer. Japan's smart bombs, however, were the elite students of its military schools and universities, teenagers stoked up with romantic nationalism by generals and admirals who stayed at home and, when the enemy finally appeared, raised well-manicured hands. The result (along with much other suffering by Japanese, at the hands of Japanese, during the same war) has been a lasting fear and mistrust of their own military, making today's Japanese the only genuine nation of pacifists known to history (except, perhaps, Americans, 1918–1941).



SO BY THE TIME Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived at Atsugi Naval Air Station on September 1, 1945 ("Bob," he said to Lieut. Gen. Robert Eichelberger, "this is the payoff"), most of his work had already been done. Emperor Hirohito, in an ill-fitting business suit, read his radio message ordering Japan's surrender, and has never worn a uniform since. A civilian cabinet under the emperor's uncle, Prince Higashikuni, was already in office. A few of the guilty admirals and generals (including General Tojo) attempted or committed hara-kiri, or took the tidier way out with a revolver; the rest simply faded away, their last official act being to offer 200 "comfort girls" for the use of MacArthur and his staff, a thoughtful gesture between military men that a straitlaced aide turned down. The rest of the Japanese nation smiled and bowed as if they were greeting allies, and not a single gun was raised against the first foreign invader on Japanese soil in 2,000 years.

When the British confined their activities in Japan to removing worn-out machinery, which may well still be clanking away in Basingstoke or Birmingham, hopelessly outclassed by Japan's latest, it became clear that the Americans were going to rule Japan single-handed. Some said for twenty-five to fifty years. The fact that the new shōgun—called "Makassa-san" by his new subjects—was a military man helped enormously. The Japanese code allows a samurai, when all hope is gone, to go over honorably to the enemy, as long as he does so "sincerely," and at the end of the war the American bombers often had a Japanese aboard to point out the targets. By pinning the blame on the defeated Japanese generals and hanging a selection of them, MacArthur facilitated the transfer of Japanese obedience, sanctioned by tradition, to himself. If not exactly

love, it was realism at first sight.

The initial aim of the Occupation was, on directions from Washington, to punish. "The plight of Japan is the direct outcome of its own behavior," scolded MacArthur's directive, "and the Allies will not undertake the burden of repairing the damage." It is not, however, very American to stand by and watch people starve, especially with American journalists about, and Japan lived through 1946 mostly on American food handouts. The Japanese GNP per head that year was $29, one of the lowest in the world, and Japanese Ph.D.s with industrial experience were glad to work for ten dollars a week. If anyone guessed that one of the world's potent industrial machines lay buried under the wrecked Japanese cities, we should know his or her name. It was certainly not MacArthur, or any of the Japanese.

The year 1946 was muddled and confused, in Japan and many other places. Various hare-brained schemes were advanced by enthusiastic young men on MacArthur's staff: Japan was to be "pastoralized," the Japanese language was to be replaced by English, and Japanese was to be written not in Chinese characters but in Latin ("American") script. Tokyo streets were posted with names and numbers, which the Japanese took down as soon as the Occupation ended. The great industrial conglomerates like Mitsubishi and Mitsui were dissolved, the result of a simplified Marxist notion that capitalism causes wars, and big capitalism big wars. They have, of course, long since come together again, and more peaceable traders it would be hard to find.

To forestall the Russians, still grimly hanging on in Tokyo in a token delegation and said to be busy on a "People's Constitution," MacArthur's young men hastily cobbled up their own constitution for Japan with passages from the Declaration of Independence, American state constitutions, and the *Federalist* papers. Confronted with the thorniest problem of Japanese politics, the role of the military, the American constitution-smiths simple abolished it in the famous Article 9: "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency will not be recognized" (the last woolly phrase an echo of the American Civil War and the legal status of the Confederacy).

Discovering, like all rulers of Japan before him, that he could not begin to govern without bureaucrats, MacArthur spared Japan's most powerful institution, and with it the head bureaucrat, Emperor Hirohito. The latter, with great personal relief, had demilitarized himself and returned to the studious life traditional in his family, emerging briefly to throw out first baseballs of the season and visit coal mines, in a short-lived attempt at a Scandinavian-style citizen monarchy. At MacArthur's orders Hirohito wryly declared that he was not a god, sharing with his knowledgeable subjects the joke that *kami* does not mean De Lawd in the Western sense, and that he remains as much, or as little, of a god now as he ever was, "a person or thing of more than ordinary significance" in a land that already has eight million of them, including all Japan's war dead.



But easily the most important development of the year 1946 was one the Occupation seems not to have noticed. Eleven days after Japan's surrender, the wartime Munitions Ministry, shorn only of its ministerial and vice-ministerial heads, changed its name to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and then to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the command and control center of the Japanese economic miracle. Whereas the U.S. and the other victorious allies dismantled their wartime rationalization of industry as quickly as they could, under the Occupation Japan's was strengthened. The same bureaucrats sat at the same desks and gave the same orders, "window guidance," to the same industrialists. MacArthur's men, bureaucrats themselves, enjoyed having handy intermediaries through whom to pass on orders to the Japanese.

Japan brought from her lost war a functioning command economy, as effective at export as it had been at wartime production, which is to say ten times as effective as those of Stalin or Mussolini—but sharing with the Duce's system a valuable entrepreneurial element, subject always to supreme state direction. The command economy is what makes Japan so different from the other "free world" industrial states, the only one coming close being that of France. The authority of the Japanese bureaucrats in economic matters is nowhere mentioned in MacArthur's constitution, and even MITI bureaucrats, on occasion, like to tell visiting Americans that it does not exist, that Japan is the paradise of something called "free enterprise."

Soichiro Honda, a former automobile repairman who learned the techniques of mass production making propellers for Toyota aircraft during the war, spent the year 1946 drinking 200 liters of black-market medicinal alcohol and wondering what to do next. Only later did he go back to work, designing a tiny motorized bicycle. In Tokyo, a young electrical engineer named Masaru Ibuka was repairing war-damaged radios for the Ministry of Communications, for whom he had supplied voltmeters during the war. Soon he was to be joined by another wartime colleague, a physicist named Akio Morita, and together they founded a tiny electrical company they called "Sound Nippon" or, for short, Sony. The miracle was under way. MacArthur's men, meanwhile, busied themselves rewriting school textbooks and snipping the swordfights from samurai movies.

The Occupation might nevertheless have been a substantial nuisance had it not been for the timely arrival of the Cold War. In September 1947, Hitoshi

Ashida, Japan's minister for foreign affairs, drew up a memo proposing that the Americans might, in the prevailing geopolitical climate, growing daily chillier, be ready to sign an early, nonpunitive peace treaty if Japan threw in its lot with them. This move would clearly not be popular in Moscow, so Japan would need some sort of guarantee that it was not just trading one occupation for another.

A sizable group of Japanese proposed the opposite, namely, joining the Soviets in their never-ending struggle against the imperialists. The group included the Japanese Communist Party (the only political party in Japan that had opposed the war, mostly from jail), the left wing of the socialists, some 250,000 Japanese POWs who had returned heavily indoctrinated from Siberia, and even a few Japanese traditionalists, who thought that the harsh discipline of Stalinism offered less threat to Japanese values than jazz and bluejeans. The Japanese labor movement, too, was heavily influenced by the JCP, and talked about a general strike.

Ashida's memo argued that an augmented, centralized Japanese police force, armed with surplus American weapons, could effectively repress any internal "uprising." The promise to deal thus with "indirect aggression" was to be Japan's quid pro quo for the proposed external American guarantee against the Soviet Union, the only nation physically able to invade Japan, apart from the Americans, who were already there.

It was no part of Ashida's scheme, however, to have the Soviets and the U.S. actually slug it out on Japanese soil, and Korea and Vietnam have since confirmed the wisdom of this view. So the first version of the Japanese plan called for empty American bases in the Japanese home islands, to be activated only in an emergency—thus provoking the Soviets as little as possible. After the sudden outbreak of war in Korea, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, converted to the Ashida plan, thought that a few live Americans on the bases would offer a more reliable deterrent, and in that form the scheme was put to John Foster Dulles when he arrived in Tokyo in January 1951 to negotiate some kind of treaty with the Japanese. Dulles's reaction was exactly that of every secretary of state since: not mutual enough.

Dulles wanted a Japanese army of 300,000 men (1982 level: 180,000) and a Japanese commitment to join something like an East Asian NATO. Yoshida said that Japan was not yet ready, psychologically, for this kind of military cooperation with the conqueror. The discussion became heated, as talks with Dulles tended to, and MacArthur was called in. He considered that the use of the U.S. bases in Japan was vital to the safety and resupply of the U.S. forces in South Korea, and sided with Yoshida. Every professional American military opinion since has agreed with MacArthur.

The Japanese therefore secured for themselves an American guarantee of their safety, giving nothing in return but the use of the bases in Japan from which the guarantee can be carried out, and the presence of, currently, 45,000 scattered Americans to make sure that it is. As a proportion of GNP, Japanese defense spending has steadily fallen since the 1950s, when it touched 2 percent. Today it nudges one percent, only a fifth, proportionately, of what America spends. Japan's yen for defense buy a thirteen-division army of doubtful combat readiness and some 250 defensive fighter aircraft. The threat of "internal aggression"—i.e., a leftist uprising in Japan—has now dwindled to perhaps two dozen graying remnants of the "Red Army" student radicals of the 1960s.

Where's the catch? Does the policy leave Japan defenseless, relying only on American promises (where are you now, ex-President Nguyen Van Thieu?), unable to pursue Japanese policies by using or threatening to use force, as other peace-loving nations do every day? Far from it. To begin with, the U.S. has only one real sanction against Japan in defense matters, the threat to reduce or remove the U.S. bases there. But this is specifically forbidden by the Japan-U.S. treaty, and anyway cannot be done without exposing the American garrison in Korea to the gravest danger, and possible destruction. The U.S. is locked into Japanese defense arrangements, and successive Japanese governments can therefore continue to ignore, as they have done for thirty-two years, the endlessly renewed American demands to shape up.



A Japanese soldier home from the war finds a job, Tokyo, 1946.



UT WHAT about Japan's own policies? Despite Makassa's billowy rhetoric about "the enemies of liberty," the Japanese have pursued, by means mostly unpopular, it is true, rational foreign policy aims for the past century and more. Japan has sought, and seeks: 1) Access to foreign markets, to be able to buy food, fuel, and raw materials; 2) Control of the seas around Japan, to keep out invaders and bring home the bacon; 3) Control of the Korean peninsula, the traditional invasion route (both ways).

Here we have the basic piece of luck that has guided Japan's postwar years: what they failed to achieve by war, they were given in defeat. The United States procured Japan's worldwide access to markets, starting with the richest, her own. The Seventh Fleet controls the seas around Japan (or used to), and the U.S. Army garrisons Korea, at least partly in the Japanese interest. The two areas where the old Japan failed most miserably, defense and foreign relations, are now handled for free by Uncle Sugar, while the Japanese get on with what they do better than anyone else, production. As a good deal, this one even outclasses Sony's purchase of rights to the transistor from Western Electric for $25,000.

Thus in August 1955 came the Sony TR55, the first Japanese transistor radio. Sony faced no competition on the Japanese home market from American transistor radios, nor were U.S. firms allowed by MITI to set up in the radio business in Japan. This one-sided arrangement was an expensive Cold War maneuver; encouraging Japanese products to penetrate the American market, without requiring any corresponding opening in Japan, would, it was thought, bind a prosperous Japan more closely to the U.S.; and anyway the tiny Japanese radios were only amusing toys. A frequent visitor to Tokyo, and one of the staunchest advocates of opening the U.S. market to Japanese manufactures, was George Meaney, the late president of the AFL-CIO. On the agricultural side, Japanese rice growers and beef producers (average herd, two and a half beasts) were correctly seen as the electoral base of the Liberal Democrats, the "pro-American" party. So their exclusion of American products was tolerated.

But the innocent largesse of Sam the Munificent was still not exhausted. In the 1920s and '30s the United States had flooded the world with cheap and serviceable products, particularly automobiles, radio sets, and useful domestic items like sewing machines and kitchen gadgets. While Europe was still trying to unload Rolls Royces and Mercedes on a depressed market, the word went out that a Ford or Chevy, while perhaps lacking in snob appeal, was unbeatable value for the money. Everyone knew the Americans were shameless, clumsy copyists with scarcely a Nobel prize among the lot of them, but their stuff sold. The U.S. was, in short, the Japan of the Jazz Age.

Things changed after the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, in which the U.S. emerged as the industrial superpower and the dollar as the key world currency. Everyone was after dollars; they rose to absurd levels of value, and outside the U.S. only gangsters, politicians, and pop stars could afford American cars or kitchen gadgets. A wide-open ecological niche appeared in the world trading picture.

We know who filled it, but how? A key element was the arrival in Japan, in 1949, of Joseph M. Dodge, the Scrooge of Detroit, a hard-nosed banker called in by the Occupation to straighten out Japan's finances. Dodge, an early monetarist, decided that the Japanese were importing too much from America and not exporting enough to America, and that throttling down the money supply was the answer. He forbade the Japanese government any form of printing-press or deficit financing, and fixed the exchange rate at 360 yen to the dollar, ten points under the then black-market rate. At that level Japanese products cost approximately half their competitors' prices. Rough and ready at first, Japan's output soon improved under the stimulus of volume production, while foreign goods became impossibly expensive luxuries for Japanese consumers.

Much self-congratulatory literature has appeared in Japan in recent years on the business wizardry, samurai spirit, sales skill, and so on of those early export pioneers. But the plain truth is that the Japanese were able to sell their cars, consumer electronics, and kitchen gadgets back to the Americans who had developed them in the first place, at prices so low that a baby (or someone like me, say) could have penetrated the American market. Exchange rates are the most important single element in export performance. The U.S., flush in victory, set the Japanese rate demeaningly low and their own at lordly levels, impossible to sustain indefinitely against clever competitors with minds pellucidly cleared by defeat. Yet the Japanese exchange rate, the bargain of the ages, lasted until 1971, and the requirement for a balanced budget—meaning stingy welfare, spartan public works, and everything sunk into exports—didn't end until 1973.

In the 1960s, while American attention was largely concentrated elsewhere (and Japan quietly did well out of another war), dissent inside Japan faded away, and the system solidified. The Japanese companies that showed promise at exports, some of them old names like Mitsui and Mitsubishi, some the creation of the Occupation years and after like Honda and Sony, had money poured into them by the Japanese banks under the direction of the finance bureaucrats. Massively financed, they reached and then passed American levels of productivity. The firms that never had much success in exports, the rickety mom-and-pop distribution system, and,

above all, the inefficient, vote-intensive farms, were protected from foreign competition.

So Japan achieved another miracle: the enormous, uneven expansion of the Japanese economy was accomplished in social harmony. In other countries, rapid, patchy modernization has bred revolution and civil war; in Japan, the sense of community ("100 million hearts that beat as one," in the wartime propaganda slogan) has held, and Japan has the narrowest gap between rich and poor of any industrial state.



THE HONEYMOON between Japan and the U.S. was definitely over by 1971, when the union-backed Burke-Hartke bill, which would have frozen the market share of foreign manufactures at the levels of the late 1960s (when Japan was already selling 2 million cars a year), was introduced. American public opinion, "rooted in hysteria and ignorance," according to one American academic (Garry R. Saxenhouse of the University of Michigan), started to set against the Japanese, and President Nixon caught the mood. His nonnegotiated quota on Japanese textiles, temporary 10 percent surcharge on imports, embargo on the export of soybeans, a basic item of the Japanese diet in which the U.S. has taken over the business China once had, and visit to communist China with only six minutes' advance notice to Tokyo, are collectively remembered in Japan as the "Nixon Shock."

The 1970s passed in tiffs and squabbles between the parties. In Japan, MITI was reactivated, liquidating industries no longer competitive (like ten-year-old blast furnaces) and busily promoting new ones, like the third-stage, knowledge-intensive industrialization summed up in the words computers and robots. When Ambassador Mansfield arrived in Tokyo in 1977, he warned that Japan-U.S. relations were in a crisis period. Only the other day he spoke of "the atmosphere of mutual recrimination." The latest in the long line of shocks, crises, and incidents is "Japscam," in which two of MITI's stable of computer makers, Hitachi and Mitsubishi, bought data and drawings (possibly) stolen from their giant competitor IBM. To Americans this comes as a revelation, not altogether new, about the true source of much of Japan's ultramodern technology. To Japanese, the cruel and devious Yankees are at it again, setting traps for semi-innocent Japanese who were only following American customs and doing their best for firm and fatherland.

So, mutually suspicious, allies perhaps, rivals certainly, the odd couple of the Pacific jog along. Many more shocks are clearly in store. Once the illusion that the Japanese are yellow Yankees has cleared from American minds, and the corresponding Japanese notion, that Americans have some tremendous, mysterious obligation to Japan (from Hiroshima, perhaps, or Tokyo Bay, or just because Uncle Sam is head of the family) that has to be worked off over the centuries, has left them—when, in short, the parties face each other in the light of common day, in their pajamas, the morning after—then the immense gulf of mutual misunderstanding, Pacific-wide, will yawn.

In many areas, no agreement is possible. If there is any truth in Reaganomics, Japan should be bankrupt. If Japanese management methods are ever introduced into America, beyond the great deal of good sense they contain—lack of petty privileges for the boss, for instance, informal communications on the job, greater equality of reward—there is something at the center of the Japanese system that Americans will never understand, or, if they do, will find repulsive and unworkable. The loyal Japanese worker is, to Americans, in some sense not a fully independent, sovereign human being, while to Japanese the American is a monster of egotism and selfishness, a person so self-centered as to be barely human.

Yet the parties are stuck with each other. America needs Japan as an ally, even a balky one, because their huge two-way trade at least guarantees that Japan will want to continue the relationship (on Japanese terms, naturally), while every other possible American ally in Asia is capricious, exposed, weak, or in some way or another a poor long-term bet. Besides, Americans are now hooked on Japanese consumer products, and access to them, or anything else they want, is, after all, a basic right guaranteed by the Founding Fathers.

Conversely, Japan needs the United States. Partly simply as a market, but, since everyone in the world wants Japanese consumer goodies, this is not completely indispensable to the relationship. More important, Japan needs to be on the crest of world technology in the key areas, and, as the recent IBM case suggests, Americans may still know a thing or two. As long as the Soviets can theoretically toast our planet, it's comforting for Japan to wear Uncle Sam's ring, but there are very severe limitations on the influence this gives Americans over Japan's defense, or rather nondefense, policies. Perhaps most important of all is Japan's need for certain foodstuffs and raw materials, where low American prices can give the Japanese some protection against being gouged by the rival supplier, Australia. This makes Japan's relationship with the U.S. look like that of a typical advanced country supplying manufactured goods to a typical backward, resource-rich one. But Oriental politeness suggests that this point should not be spelled out too clearly.

The bond, therefore, is still immensely strong, and likely to stay so, despite all the misunderstandings and recriminations, the ambivalent feelings and concealed mistrust. Just like a proper, down-home marriage, in fact. ■

ED BUZZ'S New Music Writers' Club Magazine

BY ALEX HEARD



IS THE PHRASE "maggots wriggling in a bucket of muck" art, or just plain nasty? To tell the truth, I don't know, and it's problems like that that sometimes make me want to *forget* about supercharging my prose with the incisive post-punk-pop-avant-garde top-of-the-garbage-heap atavistic two-tone fury characterized by the social attitude underlying the London riots in the long, sticky summer of 1981 (or the siege mentality and gritty hard-beat nocturnal throat incantations and apocalyptic guitar phrasing of, say, the Specials) and, I dunno, marry the girl, follow that dream, buy that house, skip stones on the lake, fish with the boy, and write a children's story with a few *positive* things to say about this country for a change for God's sake.

Luckily, moods like that don't come often, and when they do I just dye my hair a new tone and turn up the music because nobody said providing the intellectual, uh, what? scaffolding? underpinning? foundation? for—for lack of a better term, the New Music—would be easy, but we've got to have our own literature if we're going to last and you can't have a literary movement unless you stick together. This is why I founded the New Music Writer's (Writers'?) Club, although we completely reject that kind of media-imposed labeling, that is, giving us a name, which actually we did because we had to get in the phone book. We wanted to run a blank space and the phone #000-0000, but that was too much for the plug-pulling Ma Bell robot/euthanasiasts to handle.

Alex Heard is a writer who lives in Washington, D.C.

Which reminds me. Suppose you're hit with a really good phrase like "youth-anasia," as in "The music of ZZ Top is youth-anasia," that is, kid killing, but you're at the club and you don't have anything to write it down on? It's lost, man, unless you have an NMWC notebook which we sell. Membership dues, which we could really use from everybody, especially you slow-pays—understand, R. T. in Detroit?—are $20 per year. For that you get the fanzine we put out plus a chance to be part of something big.

THE NEED for the club first occurred to me one day when I went to *the club, after waking up that afternoon in a bed full of broken glass with another yellow-skinned chick with bad teeth trying to look British. The hot stinky breath of the club assaults your senses as you enter, a humid human pungent smell like somebody had thrown up on the floor, and I stepped on and slid on something that closely resembled hot, smelly, human vomit, and I could hear the Clash singing but the DJ had it cranked so loud that you couldn't hear the words. But thass okay 'cause everybody was dancing happy and it was cool.*

The band was warming up and I could tell they were just another speed-powered vocal-hooks and coy-boy adolescence tennis-shoes outfit, but I figured what the hell, maybe they can play them things (guitars). The DJ slabbed the Undertones, and as I

drained my fourth beer I paused to think about how the lyric:

lyric lyric lyric
lyric lyric lyric

[Biff: Put some Undertones stuff here. Buzz.] *really didn't relate to what was going on.*

My friend Biff came up, a performance poet who did things with barbed wire and lighter fluid and smashed TVs, and said, Let me read you this: "went five hours without a drink of water. figger i'm ready for the desert, wanna come? i'll take along my dog. he's always good for a laugh. pick you up at seven. faithfully, Pig."

I told him that was "real groovy," which was my way of saying I recognized '60s crap when I heard it and if that wasn't a direct quote from Bob "You Gotta Serve Somebody" Dylan's stream-of-consciousness should-have-been-left-in-a-drawer journal-ism hodgepodge book Tarantula *then that red-lipped vix with the cue-cut and black-and-white sidewall stripes running horizontal on her plenty ample torso* wasn't *untying my tennis-shoe laces with her eyes, which she was, from across the room.*

Yeah, he said as I took an infinite drag on my ninth cigarette and the blue smoke hung coolly in the hot bar like a piece of ripped white T-shirt floating in a pool of black ink, at least you recognized its period, he said, but what about us? Everybody's writing short song lyrics and antipoetry and wall stencils but we need some short storyists and books if anybody's going to remember us nonmusical scenesters, 'cause this scene can't *be allowed to be just music history.*

So I said, Yeah, we'll start a movement, as I snorted up a line of coke as big as a banana from a mirror hand-held for me by the moddest moodiest kohl-eyed chick I'd seen since the night before and as I closed my eyes and felt the freezing blast of uncut cocaine rushing through my nasal passages and felt the first slow ebb of the postsnort oyster sliding down the back of my throat, the chickie attached her lips to mine and I told her after a fifteen-minute face-eat that it would be all right, Daddy was home.

[Biff: I think I need more stuff about the club and are we having the writing test this month or just go straight to the Q. and A.? Buzz.]



THE MAILSTROM



CORRESPONDANCE

ADRESSE

Q. Dear Buzz: Help! I'm having trouble with a story. I've got this character who works in a record store and he's about going crazy because the manager is a '60s survivalist Jerry GarciaHead Hairbag—I mean as far as the guy's even semimod disk shelf goes we're talking trendy post-punk forced-forward-motion semi-neo-garage-oriented pessimism, but as you know that's pretty much all except the very smallest labels will deal with these days. Basically I want to affirm the beyond-aggressivism positivist, almost ceremonial tribal songs that were ruined by the sartorial fluff of New Romantic posers like Adam Ant and his blatantly sex-image "we're all warriors" sloganeering. But how? Is it enough to just make the character quit the job? By the way, last month's feature on blood-writing was Best Yet.

—Blade Lipps, Angst, Ill.

A. You've got a problem we've all faced: how to put drama in a piece without bowing to Old Writing conventions that require things to happen. When I first started out I had a very similar character who set stage at a club and he was just as sick of the pseudo-anarchic decompressed mannered-vocal robo-disco Art-as-Machinery stuff *à la* Kraftwerk and Devo that was ruining good plastic at the time. Originally I had him assassinating Gary Numan but that seemed almost too almost-*Taxi Driver* so I had him quit his job and burn his unemployment checks as a gesture of, what? stupidity, I guess. So you'll have to find another angle.

Q. Dear Buzz: Reading. What about it? I mean do we have to read Old Lit and all that snooze-oriented book-as-anchor crud like *The Return of the Native* and especially the Bible and worst of all like fags like F. Scott Fitzgerald? And while we're at it, what about all that other literary junk like plot and characters and themes and rising and falling action and onomatopoeia, caesura, assonance, diphthong, idiom, subject matter, paragraphs, endings, avoiding needless words and loose sentences, and subjects and predicates and you know just *everything* all the neolithic flab-armed English teachers lay down on us in high school? I mean isn't a lot of what we're all about the idea that we're going to junk all that? Or are you guys really just selling out?

Y. A. Duck, harDCore, the nation's capital

A. By the way "funny" names are reaaaaaaaaaally cool, man, just wanted you to know that. We are not selling out and believe me just what we can and cannot do given the imposition of the English language and typesetting and printing that we've

N'écrire que sur le côté réservé à la correspondanc

inherited is a problem we spend a lot of time on. But let's start with your first question.

Reading, sure if you want to but don't feel guilty if you don't, and forget about the Graybeard stuff and especially the Bible and we don't "allude" to anything anyway because everything is now, not then. Some things are worthwhile, especially some of the Beat stuff except that they wrote about jazzzzzzzzzz—and I don't know, that's just not my "bag," you know?—but man that's all they had to listen to.

It's okay to "dig" Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and study the way he got the jazz beat to become part of his prose style, but as for stuff like *The Dharma Bums*, forget it, take a bottle of sleeping pills instead, you'll stay awake longer, it's all very "heavy" '60s imported Eastern Mysticism even though he wrote it in the '50s apparently. Also cool to say you have read William S. Burroughs but people will assume you're a junkie, for good or ill. Hunter Thompson is a '60s Doonesbury joke and should have been killed by Bikers and can't make up a thing without drug humor in it, like Cheech and Chong. Henry Miller's pretty good because he lived kind of like we do. Aside from that, don't worry about it.

Always remember that your job is to relate the "punk" and "new wave" (those words should always be written like that, sarcastically) rhythms to your prose, and this is where the real experimentation with personal style comes into play. I mean we want to go beyond the e e cummings no-punctuation gig and the take-it-to-an-extreme semiblank pageism of Yoko Joko Ono. There's lots of fun things you can do like running entire lines of of of of of of ofs and :::::::::::::::: crazy colons and screEEE

A story

by Jane Hamilton

My Own Earth

I AM the Bennie they write about. My Aunt Ruth came to stay for a week and she brought with her a small packet of Mother's letters (and she bemoaned the fact that somehow she had thrown out all the others, or mislaid them) and then last Thursday I was going through some boxes from the farm and I found some notebooks of Dad's and this story or reflection was one of the few things that was in ink and not smeared. He almost always wrote in pencil, which is hopeless after two months.

It floors me—this sort of old-fashioned romance my parents carried on. It was only fifteen years ago —1967—but still this kind of thing, it seems to me, would not happen today. Had my mother left the farm in 1982 she would surely stay in the city, become a flannel-suit sort of person in a publishing house, and never marry again but carry on with this one and that one. She would be lonely and rage now and then but she would not let herself entertain the notion of crawling back to the farm on all fours, her tail between her legs.

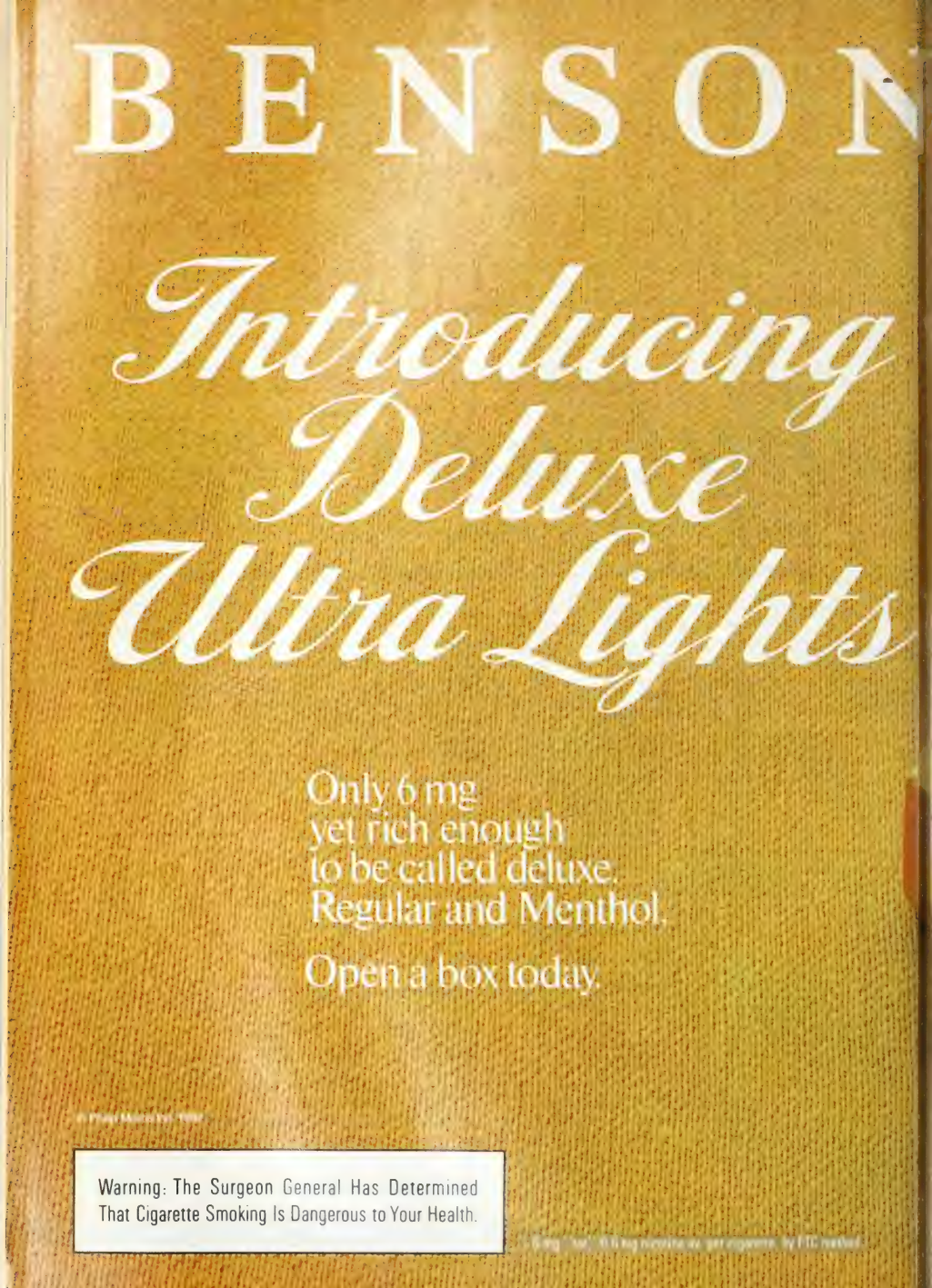
My father believed all along that a tide of faith and goodness would sweep them back together.

I am the Bennie Sara and Will write about. I am still trying to connect the child they write about with myself. It astounds me that I am the one who was toted around in a crusted Volkswagen for a year, although I do vaguely remember Maine and the island and the nursery school in West Virginia and the little girl, Sally, whom we lived with in the winter. My memories are shapeless but never, surprisingly enough, grim. I remember the feel of my father and how he held me against the dark prairie of his chest. I was not afraid of never seeing my mother again. I knew, just as my father knew, that our life would assume the shape he meant for it. We had to get over this hump of a year before we came to our senses—my mother had to exhaust her fantasy of dancing with three hundred thousand men and my father had to parade around in foreign lands to know what was priceless to him. I think all along my father wanted to practice something Thoreau said about perfecting his nation's culture by his own fireside. And I think my mother decided that he should have a little struggle, that everything had come too easily for him: farm, wife, baby. I attribute the fact that my mother wrote bitter poems to her tender age and grand delusions. I say this from my perch of twenty-one. But I don't know any of this. I have pieced together what I want to believe from a dozen or so scraps.

I do know that sometimes I have the urge to run through the lunch-hour crowds chasing two figures that are just beyond my reach. I want to find my parents and shout at them, "*You* are the winners." And I want to clasp their hands and wave a banner and crown them with laurels. But the farm is gone and they are gone and I am left with this scrap of my father's journal and a small packet of my mother's letters.

Jane Hamilton lives with her husband on a farm in Wisconsin. This is her first published story.

Deborah Rust


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F I WRITE about myself as if I am simply a character in a story I am distanced from my own small misfortune. It is as if I am a cow in the barnyard, standing in my own sweet filth, and suddenly with a torrent of rain I am washed clean.

For a moment, at least, this is how I see Bennie and Sara and someone who is me, called Will:

Will imagined the moment Sara left and all his travels afterward as scenes, each scene a window, as if his story were a Christmas story or an Easter story portrayed in a series of department-store windows. A full year had passed since Sara left them. Will and Bennie. Last March, a year ago, he remembered how she used to listen to music in the late afternoon. She stared out to the bare trees, each pair making their own arch to the sky. Even if he made no sound when he came in after the chores she would feel his presence, or perhaps she smelled sheep and billygoat, manure and hay—in any case, she would move quickly to the record player and turn off her music and start to the sink with frenzied motions as if she were a rabid cat in the heat of July. She would slink up the loft stairs with ears flat against her head, as if by pasteurizing milk on the stove for fifteen minutes he was bent on destroying her meager solitude.

He had always thought they were really just children. He fantasized about their being Russian gypsies in the forest playing hide-and-seek among the trees, but always there was the cauldron steaming and they would come back to it, refreshed and happy.

Her departure went like this: she came out to him in the field when he was plowing in early spring. She had her Boy Scout knapsack on her back. He had forgotten who he was, knowing only that there were seagulls following the plow, eating the worms he was turning over in the earth. She must have shouted at him over and over again, because he heard her but didn't know what it was, seeing only the soil turn and the gulls follow.

Finally, she ran and scared the gulls away.

"Will," she said breathlessly, "I can't anymore. I have to go. I can't anymore. Bennie is asleep." She did not weep as she called to him. "I'm sorry but I just can't do it anymore." And she ran from the field on down the lane and to the road.

Unbelieving, he continued plowing until all the earth was turned, some deep brown, the north end sandy, the west rich black. He walked back to the house slowly, thinking about how his grandfather had plowed this land with a horse and how his fur-trapping great-great-uncle had walked Wisconsin when most of it was woodland and marsh.

He found Bennie standing in his crib sobbing, his nose so runny that Will stuck him in the tub and gave him a full bath.

After Sara left, he led a life of "intense rage," to use her words. He could find nothing in the kitchen because she had rearranged the pots, the bread pans; where were the potholders, the matches, the scrubbers; where was the crusted scrub brush, dirty from four years of muddy carrots, that Hilda had given him? He got in the habit of slamming the cabinet doors. There were three half-filled bottles of molasses, flour all over the floor of the grain shed, and moths fat with flour or perhaps babies. The bed where Sara and he slept was full of nothing but her scraps from the multitudinous things she loved to do, or things she thought she ought to do. Scarves were never finished. She wasn't content just sitting reading a book: she had to be knitting while she was reading or holding a paintbrush between her teeth. One drawer was full of corduroy scraps, the rest tight with wool left over from hats and scarves and sweaters, mittens and baby booties and blankets. The next was jammed with papers, bits of poetry, unused stamped envelopes sent to her by countless political organizations that all pleaded ruin without her contribution. There were also all her books in stacks on the floor, all the books she tried to entice him into.

He found himself kicking the ram when the ram charged him; he was rough with the eggs when he collected them, so that several were broken by the time he got to the house, and once he forgot to feed Bennie lunch and Bennie ran away down the road to his grandfather's house.

Everywhere Will looked there were remnants of Sara. In the sink he found three long black hairs. She didn't have the grace to cover her tracks; those hairs taunted him. Surely there had to be more to their life together than three solitary hairs glued to the bathroom sink and some drawers full of scraps.

Of course, Bennie was proof of their union. Will watched Bennie carry a kitten by the neck or would hold Bennie close to him when they slept and would knew that Bennie had not simply sprung from the froth of a wave or been plunked down by some white long-beaked bird known to deliver babies. He was Will's.



N JUNE Will arranged to rent a farm for a year. He put Bennie in the backseat of the VW with a sack of clothes and apples, and he put himself in the driver's seat, slammed the door, and drove away without looking back, without waving to the dozens of ancestors who stood on the front stoop.

He had left the farm before, during his college years. The thrill of the university and the city was off after three days. Will spent his freshman year in the library without the beanie they were supposed to wear, reading gardening magazines, novels, some poetry and philosophy, mysteries, fairy tales, shop bulletins, and once a torrid drugstore novel. He studied and read through college knowing that the minute he received his diploma in agriculture

uld step back into his real self, his farming self. But in this vagabond year, for the first time in life, Will stalked adventure, not gingerly but with ım in his mouth, with the same gleam in his eye ıt a Jehovah's Witness wears on one's doorstep. He ł Bennie lived in Maine, ate lobster, and built ats; they picked apples in West Virginia, he worked a cabinet shop in Richmond, and in the winter y stayed with old friends Tanya and Peter, cooked the household, and cared for Bennie and Tanya's le girl, Sally. It was somewhat of an adventure Will to be a housewife. They were not reckless, y did not fight evil.

Will never even smoked a joint—they simply went m place to place as if they were on a quest and netime they might very well come upon just the ng. He wondered if he ought to go straight to shington or New York and squat on a dignitary's op, or at least march with the crowds in protest ut Vietnam. He had managed to miss all of the rs: he was too young for World War II, he had ernia at the start of the Korean war, and now he s too old for Vietnam. Yet he remembered some- ng John Donne had written and he felt it—how h man's humiliation was his own. If he were a's age he could shout and march and defy as omes that age. Will listened quietly and obsesely to the world through his AM transistor. There s nothing more he could do. His year could be alogued simply as Maine, West Virginia, Richnd, and now spring again, Kentucky. Will was ying with his friend Jim in Kentucky, way up a ler. He was waiting for the red bud to blossom l the peepers to sing from the ooze down the way. He wanted Bennie, who had just turned five, to see red bud. Bennie sat in the outhouse in the morn- , in the harsh March mornings, and if Will or Jim ne too near he would screech "Aarrrraaaaaaaah" he sat on the toilet. One morning a cheetah, the t a tiger, the next a hairy ape, the next an ac- volcano. He was at the age where he would lain to you that deer meat tasted like malted k, and spinach leaves were ogre tongues. When , who was a Baptist, told Bennie a story about d the Father, Bennie told Jim it was He the Ben- who had made the world back in Wisconsin. He s at the age where he would tell you to eat his ner if he got angry or if he temporarily didn't e you. He played Dirty Doctor with Sally in the sement and stuck a harmonica in the crack of her ttom. "A termometer," he said, when Will startled m one afternoon.

One day at the end of apple season last fall, Will s picking winesaps as fast as he possibly could ause they were paid by the bushel and he didn't ow what job came next. He was tired by ten in morning but he couldn't stop now. In the frenzy his epileptic motions he kept hearing Daddy, ddy, Daddy . . . but he dismissed the calls as tired sts wandering through his nearly vacant mind.

The calls came closer and finally arrived at his feet, crying out "Daddy!" Bennie thumped his head against the ladder again and again and told Will he didn't like him anymore. He had escaped from the nursery school and walked two miles out to the orchards. He just wasn't going to be carted around to church buildings where they made you trace daisies and then cut them out and paste them into a paper vase. He wasn't going to do that crap anymore.

That day Will collected his apple money and his belongings, went to Woolworth's, bought a kite, and spent the afternoon lying in the grass with Bennie, who held the kite twine in his own two hands.

In all these travels, all the faces and friends, he could not forget the farm. Often he felt as if he were an old man looking back on something so long ago that it seemed outside himself. There were the small things he longed for, that one phrase of music, that single line of a Handel concerto that Sara used to play, and he hungered for it in a way that a man in war hungers for the soapy smell of his girl, and Will carried the music with him the way his uncle carried in his pocket the spoon he ate with at the ice-cream shop the night before he went back to the trenches —still crusted with cold hot fudge.

There were the larger things he coveted also: he wanted Sara to hide in the pantry from Bennie the way she used to when he was one. She sang in a high-pitched almost whine that sounded like a Japanese harp and it would drive Bennie mad with delight trying to find her. For a long time they couldn't understand why Bennie's first words were high-pitched and utterly nasal.

He wanted her to stick clothespins on him the way she used to—without his noticing. Often he would discover, standing in the line at the bank or at the farmers' co-op, a clothespin hanging from the crotch of his pants in the back, or from the neck of his sweatshirt.

A thousand things. They walked in the woods at night whenever there was a full moon and they climbed to the top of the hill and then they danced. Miss Lucia, their tiger cat, followed them and spoke of such things as beetles and mouse nests as she sat on the hill, watching. They worked together: Will dug holes and filled them with sheep manure and then Sara made the seedbeds and planted the squash seeds or the melons or the pumpkins. He made a trench for the popcorn and she came squatting down the row with the bag of seeds.

They ran out, in the cool of an August night, and picked sweet corn and galloped back to the house like a team of workhorses to quick-blanch the corn and scrape it from the cob and fast get it into the freezer. They slept outside with the lambs when the animals went down to pasture in the summer; they fell asleep in front of the stove in the winter right after supper —let the dishes fall away into the deepest pits of hell. They had Bennie between them at the supper table. He was their little fur child, he was their song.

WILL REMEMBERED seeing Sara for the first time at the farmers' market. First she was a customer talking to him about cooking and then all of a sudden she was beside him, giving and receiving change, bundling broccoli into paper sacks, and telling people how to make raspberry jelly. For years he had made eyes at the slim dark women who stood across the table, across the sea of fruits and vegetables. He grinned at them and stared at them (and they stared back) and he held their stare longer than simply meant hello or nice fruit or the mole on your chin has such a blond hair growing from it. But here she was helping him. She had such large teeth he was sure she might do anything—glide across the Rubicon as well as come stand behind his table. It made him feel powerful, having her there; had she been with him two days before at the supermarket he would have been able to take back the oranges that he realized too late had rotten spots on them. But he had paid for them and standing in the parking lot he had felt too timid to resist. That was what he remembered about meeting her: his sense of power coupled with the dimming memory of once being too timid to do ordinary things.

That was before Sara talked about hers instead of theirs, me instead of us, before she ran out into the night without him as if she were fleeing the grasp of a boa constrictor. She had grown tired of her toy husband, her toy farm, because both demanded more work than she could ever have imagined when she first dreamt of the farm life. She had never felt her back in so many different places before, she had never guessed that her knees might give out, she had not bargained for life without hot showers.

Sara charmed him with the poems she knew by heart and her suitcase plastered with stickers from a dozen airports. But Will realized now that she was perceptive about herself and no one else, that her confidence and maturity were a mannerism only, and that her way, with a running start, was to take a long skid on top of the world.

Maybe she no longer respected a man who got up too early each morning and began a day as if there were vengeance in him, as if he must purge himself of a dread disease or an unutterable sin committed when three and a half. But that sounded like the stark language of the Faulkner novel she had read out loud to him. If she had invented this grim tale, well, then, she was wrong. He simply liked to smell the hay and the animals in the early morning, he loved his own strength as he stacked apple boxes before the sun came up, to him there was nothing more beautiful than a dewy soybean field just after the first cultivation. It was the rusty cars out in the sheepyard, the grunt a ewe made when she discovered her lamb in a heap of blood and mucus, it was the days when there was so much snow, way up to the backdoor, that you had to stay in and read seed catalogues and sleep. It was a thousand unsung ta that woke him up in the black of the night. there was the other force—walking in the kitc at night he could feel his ancestors around the st his great-great-uncle the trapper, his great-gran ther the threshing-machine builder, his grandfa the dairy man, his grandmother the woman who seven babies and kept six. They sat and the r smoked pipes and she darned endless socks and t told Will he had planted a little too early, or he'd better worm the lambs; they talked about it hadn't rained enough that year, they talked ab the days before apple trees needed to be spra Will sautéed liver and saw them clearly in the st

He thought of his father haying two years ago how he tried to throw the bales onto the wagon. was spent, his hands crooked, his back unforgiv he couldn't see to drive the tractor anymore, if he couldn't throw bales he might just as well taken out to the burning pile. Throw him on w the next damp day came and the garbage was rea the winds blowing from the right direction. knew his father felt this way.

Will looked at his hands; they were large strong and he would use them while they last This was the divine scheme. He had always wan Sara to know this: the strength of his people, force of the land, more powerful than the single l of Handel. It was a force and a beauty that m death, even his own, inconsequential. He carried ancestors just as he carried his children, in his blo and he worked the land with them, for them.

Sara was wasting her bones and muscles and joi in a sleazy hamburger café. He didn't realize h troubled she had been until he found a poem, o scrap, that she had written in one of her noteboo

February 7
I am waiting for the persimmon
to ripen.
A luxury it owns—the swell
belly
which I will not have by
you
and I am bitter to the taste
a hollow pit
chucking out seeds
to the wind.
I am the old bitch gone in the teeth.

He couldn't understand this. She had Bennie, ter all, he had said out loud. He just could not derstand her sense of sterility, and it left him co pletely bewildered and then he felt as if he had be bitten by a viper for no apparent reason.

She left in the spring with no warning. Her r was no greater than it had been, a sophomoric ra it had seemed to him. Nevertheless life was even a not unhappy. But the wind changed for her, not ev the land could keep her. She smelled somethi mysterious and strong just beyond the horizon. A then she was gone.

September 8, 1960

ie.
ıere are always plenty of adequate words on
when one feels despondent, depressed, gloomy,
ul, angry, seething, etc., etc., but when one is
y, utterly floating, in rare ecstasy, there are no
ls to use that don't sound trite, cutesie-pinksie,
etc. I have not written in my journal for days
those blank pages spell euphoria to me.
am in love with the most stunning man on earth
were he to swipe the David and stand in its
e there would be no hullabaloo over the missing
terpiece but great joy over the newfound wonder.
is kind and strong too and smart and he makes
feel as if everything that flows from my ruby lips
refulgent jewel. I met him in July at the farm-
market they have here around the capital square.
was selling cattails and broccoli and black rasp-
ries and we started talking about cooking with
tail roots and by and by he got busy with cus-
ners and so I boldly jumped in and helped him
l. One thing led to another. We have Saturdays
ɜether and then he fires up his truck, a real honker
e is, and drives seventy miles back to the farm. I
ɔpe in the library and read Russian folktales to
nsole myself. I'll say no more except that he is
irty-two and he is the first man I've ever met that
could imagine spending more than seven and a
alf minutes with.
I'll tell you the details when I see you in two
eeks!—Come prepared to help your poor dumb
ster who is completely mystified by calculus and
hemistry. I long to be a Ukrainian Easter egg
ainter.

love,

Sara

January 12, 1961

ar Ruthie,
called Mother to tell her I'm Mrs. Will Sckamp
l she cried. She told me I'm too young and don't
ɔw my own mind and what about college, and I
l her how you thought Will was perfect. It was
awful conversation but it's over.
Will is teaching me everything. When he is asleep
ɔok at the fine lines underneath his eyes, a diary
all the days I have not known him, and I think
t all the time in the world is not enough time to
ɔw him. He is teaching me about sheep and soon
will prune the fruit trees, tree by tree, and then
will plant together, row by row. I am reading
ɔrge Eliot by the fire. My chemistry lab manual
ɔurning right this minute and keeping me toasty
:m (by a process that is mysterious to me but
ıetheless beautiful).

your

Sara

Ruthie—

July 5, 1961

All right so the cats have ripped through the screen in the kitchen and they, mainly Miss Lucia who is the instigator, march into the pantry as if they are cadets or baton girls in a parade. I love to have them with me, I take pleasure in the ripped screen, I rejoice in the gash. Will says NO and swats them with the broom. The poor creatures are thoroughly confused because at one moment I am stroking them and giving them milk and cookies and the next Will is flooding the house with barbaric yaps.

I long for the sea in July, or at least a lake. I would gladly settle for a pond, a puddle, an oozing. We are utterly landlocked in this July wet-heat nightmare. Last night I dreamt of a great white fish, hurtled by terrific frothy waves; there were hours of gasping for breath and slapping hard down on the water. I grabbed Will, surely octopus arms, and flailed him about and somewhere in the midst of all this I felt as if I'd conceived a child. If it's true I'll probably give birth to a blue gill or a minnow. Not a word to anyone; this is pure speculation.

At nineteen I have turned into a real hausfrau. You are going to be a great scientist, you will have unraveled the mystery of mouse whiskers and I will have only ten small crystal jars of strawberry jam as evidence that I indeed existed in the summer of 1961.

Will and I are going to market and becoming real farm marketers. Each Saturday morning there is a reunion: there is Juan who wants to rock and roll with me and he kisses me and stuffs radishes in his pockets; there is Will's friend Masha from high school who is homosexual we think and he paws Will and tells him the lettuce is real lovely; there is Midnight Star, four years old (!!). There are adults passing on one level, above my eye level, and a whole world of babies in wagons and strollers on the bottom level. Will is calling—telling me he is starting out to the garden. From May until November I will have no time that is my own. To the green beans . . .

Sara

November 19, 1961

Ruthie,

Now that I am going to be a mother I have given a lot of thought to our scrappy childhood. It was Father who used to let me crawl under the table when Mother had all her distinguished alumni over to dinner. He didn't know that I pinched all the ankles that looked fat and juicy. Not one distinguished guest uttered a squeak noise from being pinched that I ever heard. But what puts me in a rage even now when I should be mature and my ire cooled (or channeled at least) is the fact that Mother never really explained to me when Father died and it took years for me to get my courage up to ask you. Mother didn't have the ability to communicate with any person under eighteen. With me she didn't have heart attack, dead, gone, forever, in her vocabulary. All I knew was that Father had gone to work and that he most certainly had not come home. You went off to college and I wondered if that meant you might not come back too. I had that enormous back room full of hamsters and cats and big black Sam and once a raccoon for a while, and it smelled so foul Mother never went in—she was allergic to cat hair, remember? My memories are thin and gray but somehow pleasing to me—because I was right with my wild hair and dirty hands and Sam sleeping on my bed. Sometimes I think I've hated her, really hated her, but now it seems poignant that she grew attached to Sam after I left for school—as if she were saying I'll express my love for you, Sara, by taking care of your damn dog.

Well, I'm going to do it the right way. The first thing Will does when he sees me is put his ear to my stomach. Do you rage, Ruthie, or do I have excessive portions of fury in my system? More soon, the goats are crying for breakfast.

Your adoring sister,

Sara

August 4, 1962

Hi Ruthie,

The postmaster told me I was just like a poem with Bennie. This pleased me. I am exactly like I thought I would never be with a child. Does this make sense? I cannot bear to leave him, I cannot wait for him to wake up from his naps, I want to have him with me—he *is* me as much as a strand of my hair or a finger or an elbow. He is so little and wise and it is worth all the dirty diapers in the world to have him look at me the way he does when I rock him.

I am exhausted and still fat but a poem nonetheless.

your Sara

September 28

Dear Ruthie,

It has been a perfect day. Instead of scra
through the tomatoes lifting each plant up to
there is a blaze of fruit underneath; instead o
ing my hands black with earth and dust a
black that is somehow tomato-ness (I left Will
all this), I climbed up the hill and went throu
village to the Fumers' house. In a season w
sometimes feel that my hips and hands and
are becoming gnarled and my hair is turning
before my very eyes and that Will and I are
to spit at each other in the fury of our harves
how desperate we are worrying over the pepper
the melons; the tomatoes keep him up at nigh
apples make him cross in the day—never min
the very thick of this strange dance we do each
I burst out of the "house" in flaming red, with
nie in gray corduroy and we sat on the Fur
lawn overlooking the golden maples in the vil
Pierre, Susan's hunchbacked husband who scu
brought me beer in a soup bowl because they
run out of glasses and I sat on the lawn and wat
the gold of the town and the white steeple of
Congregational church and the rusty pink of
own fruit trees and Pierre kept bringing me beer
egg-salad sandwiches and you know he is small
disfigured but his face is astonishingly beaut
Children played around me and I felt the consi
hum of adult conversation but I was outside o
all as if I were standing on my tiptoes looking d
into a mossy aquarium. Except that Pierre kept m
ing my hair from my eyes every time he came o
and he kept saying how goddamned everything
and then laughing and then looking into my face a
asking me if I was happy. He is miserable, gifted,
pain, and yet that single stroke of his fingers on
face made me happy.

I must stop. Will is going to sleep. Two rooms f
all our lives and no hot water and all those veget
bles and no proper equipment—we ought to char
admission for a glimpse of pre-Iron Age existenc
Will is so tired at night and it puts me in a rage.

But if the while I think on thee dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

love,

S

February 11, 1966

ie,
rd tell that February happens to be a cruel
many people especially in northern cli-
ey say so. Who they think they are—who
ey are is not certain, a mass of authorities
oats and rabbit ears no doubt. In any case
twenty-four years old Ruthie and I'm feel-
nt. It's February and this "house" is cold
e has never been any desire in it and Bennie
lu and has spit up all over everything and
s are frozen out on the line and Will prunes
chard all day long and when he comes in he
haggard and cold that I could lie down and
him. I'm always shoving books at him so
ell me interesting things and he tries but five
later he is curled up in his red blanket sound

used to say when I first knew him, "You'll
ung girl and I'll be old and you'll turn rest-
ut I said, "No I won't, no I won't." Damn
so right. I molt like a hen leaving behind an
aracter, becoming strange and new while Will
al, plodding away at the earth like a Missouri
orse.
is so perfect. Somewhere I began to distrust
n the black that is my heart where all my evil
es I wonder if anyone can be truly good like
eems to be. How can he stand up there at mar-
miling at the people, year after year, answering
questions and making them feel so cheery be-
this beautiful man is smiling down on them
g them the word that Cortland apples stay firm
pie.
thie I want to go live by the sea and see a hun-
thousand different men and have a wild Irish-
bend down on his knees and tell me the story
athleen N'hoolahan.
ou are my one friend Ruthie, which is why I
to you, my hale and hearty sounding board. It
ns like we are miles from civilization, not to men-
culture. Bennie is always learning new things
the work never ends. It is either the flu or an
ache or the laundry or the greenhouse or a hang-
l or pots and pans or or or . . . It is not Bennie's
lt and I'm trying to accept our lives. I envy you
the lab and the purity of Scientific quest. I bet
neone else washes your petri dishes.
Today I told Bennie he had to play by himself
ietly for an hour while I sat in bed and read. I
lt so guilty the entire time that I read the same
ıragraph over and over. Ugg.

Sara

July 18, 1966

Ruthie,

Today the malt machine didn't work just right and of course it was so unbearably hot everyone wanted milkshakes and/or malts and it took roughly four minutes to make just one (I clocked it once). You have to stand there holding the container for four minutes while you sense with your head bent down, your eyes averted, how restless They all are, sweating and drooling and writhing in their booths.

It is late, Ruthie. I have ridden my bike through the dark city, have sat on the porch looking out to the lake (how lucky I was to find this place), some friends stopped over with cake and drink and good conversation. There is freedom in my skinny bed, my kitchen range that has only one working burner, the rickety steps that lead down to the lake. Each day is crowded and rich and varied and when I take a bath after work in the quiet house, just myself and the cricket, I think to myself, this is It.

You asked if I miss Bennie and Will. In my mind they are just as I left them. Bennie asleep in his crib, Will plowing the south field. It is too much otherwise, Ruthie, and I have to get on with my life here. Will writes now and then, terse letters that say only what he is doing at the moment (he is driving all over the eastern seaboard) as if there is no past and no future. He never mentions Bennie which is, I sometimes think, kind of him and sometimes hateful. I never tell people about my past because my crime is perceived as one of the most heinous. How could she do it? etc., etc.

I have a long day ahead of me tomorrow Ruthie, filled with grilled cheese and California burgers and reubens—everything in that place tastes the same to me now—even hard-boiled eggs carry the ubiquitous grease. To bed.

Love,

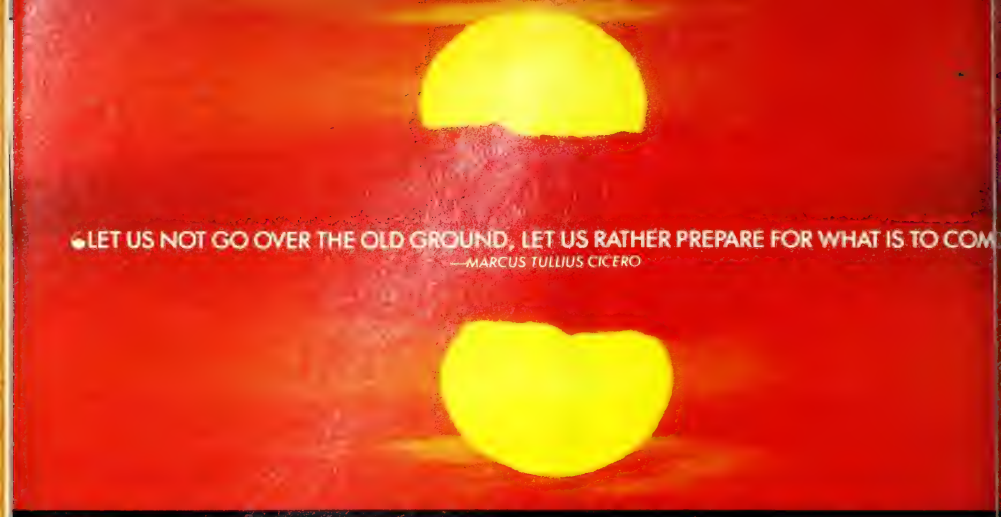
Sara

September 9, 1966

Dear Ruthie,

The sun is rising outside my window. Just home from a party where I danced all night. (I have to work today.) Do you think you could come next weekend instead of this one? I'm thinking of going to Isle Royale with some friends, and this weekend is our last chance. Went roller-skating in the early part of the evening wearing mother's crimson dress from 193–? and an old beaver hat. If this is the only weekend for you I'll gladly forgo Isle Royale but maybe next weekend is better. I'm yours,

Sara



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April 20, 1967

A few nights ago something terrible happened, Ruthie. I went to a folk dance and I wore a velvet brown jumper and a crimson grosgrain ribbon in my hair and I felt wild and strong and beautiful. I danced with each man as if he were my own. I was like the old ram finally let into the pasture with the ewes in November: his lip curling up, smelling what must be far better than anything Chanel could ever dream up. I spun with each man down the line in the reel so that the room blurred into a gelatinous calm and there was only that strange mouth and eyes—and we were intimate with each other in a way that only strange dancers can be. (Will rarely danced with me in all the time I knew him because I was shy and this made me angry and sad, as if I were not allowing me to make love to him.)

After the dance I rode my bicycle home through the cool of the night. My friend Jack was sitting on the steps. He is a high-strung political-science major who I served cream of asparagus soup to once in July. He wanted to be a concert pianist but when he realized it was hopeless he decided to study law.

He said he had watched me dance. He was very quiet and sort of weepy and I knelt down next to him and put my arms around him and murmured soft things as what's the matter and how can I help. Suddenly, my words put him into a blind rage. (A drunken rage I might add.) He jerked himself up and I cried out how heartless and insensitive I was and how I was completely selfish and furthermore ignorant about everything political that is going on in the world and on campus and how in these tragic years it would take someone completely irresponsible not to say even deaf, blind, and mute not to become politically involved. His nose was runny and he pouted like a three-year-old and shouted like a fifteen-year-old practicing his first rejection. Finally he shoved me down the stairs and threw a broken wine flask into my face.

I just stood there thinking of the intense yellow of the daffodils outside Mother's flat and I thought of her reading into the night in her nightgown and bed jacket and I wondered for the first time if she was lonely. Jack was a good friend albeit a hysterical one who had just tried to smash my face or blind me, or something, and all I could think of was bright yellow and then the dim yellow of Mother's night lamp.

I think I must have cried out that I was frightened because a neighbor came and then took me right away to the hospital. (My eyes are fine—my face a little cut up.) But for the first time I felt what Bennie must have felt when he stood in his crib crying for me. I thought of the young wife in Pound's poem waiting for her husband and all the pity and terror of it and I felt the horror of bombs flying and white light searing the eyes. I suddenly knew that I didn't want to be alone in this madness. (And Jack is right, I am not political—the whole scene scares me.) I understand little—only that I know Will better than anyone, working next to him, row after row, and that we are partners growing into the earth.

I am going back to find him, Ruthie, to be his partner. It is my pledge, it is my promise.

Sara



It is odd that I don't remember the reunion. My mother was frightened of Johnson and war and young men throwing things at her. My father was aching to farm his own land and somehow they took up again, not where they left off, but as if they were starting for the first time.

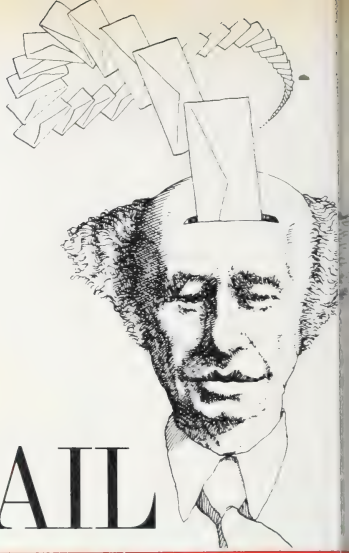
I have two younger sisters, Nora and Elsbeth, who have lived with my Aunt Ruth since my parents died two years ago. My father was killed swiftly by the nitrogen dioxide in a neighbor's silo in late November. Knowing the dangers associated with silage my father was, for the first time in his life, careless. I missed him so much and our farm situation was so precarious after he died that I couldn't help being angry with him. How could he have been so stupid? There are a few things that a farmer theoretically always remembers: watch the bull if you own one, look for the signs of nitrogen dioxide in the silo, don't get tangled up in the tractor's power takeoff. Still, every year there are injuries and deaths. My father was tired from his own harvest, he was no longer young, and they were in a hurry to fill the silo. He got caught.

My mother drowned eight months later in Lake Michigan. She was visiting her older brother in Chicago, trying to settle the estate and apparently woke early and walked to the beach for a swim. It was a windy morning; had she been listening to the radio she would have known that there were high-wave alerts. My mother loved to swim, and she would have innocently greeted the waves as if they were high and rough expressly for her pleasure. She was not a strong swimmer.

The town was extravagantly sad over her death—and wild with gossip about her broken heart and subsequent suicide. Although my sister Elsbeth is still unsure I know my mother did not kill herself.

I remember coming into the house at evening and seeing not my mother sniffing into a steaming pot but my father making pancakes or omelettes for dinner, and hearing my mother up in her loft playing some sad Swedish fiddle tune. This probably happened only a few times but I like to think of it as commonplace in my magical, lost childhood.

I do remember a real conversation I had with my mother when I was six or seven. I asked her what really happened to us when we died and she said, "We just grow into the earth and all our parts get mixed around and then we climb back up straight to the sky as a beautiful strong oak tree." But I knew better. I knew that we would close our eyes and there would be darkness only for a moment and then a flash brighter than the neon sign over Elsie's Café. Because I knew that in the end everyone would be carted straight to heaven on the wings of an angel. ■



by Joseph Epstein

OTHER PEOPLE'S MAIL

The letters of famous people are most interesting if you read between the lines.

I RECENTLY heard a scandalous story about an academic, a political scientist whose specialty is civil liberties, who has been opening and reading his colleagues' mail. What, one wonders, does he expect to find therein? Invitations, offers, deals? Yearnings, dark secrets, details of quotidian life? Passions, conspiracies, confessions? A great many things besides, all of which are none of his damn business? The thought of this man rifling through other people's letters is extremely unpleasant. Yet, when for a moment I relax my distaste for him, I recognize that between him and me there is chiefly this difference—I wait until they are dead to read other people's mail.

Voyeurism by hindsight may be a part of my love for reading letters, but only a small part. The letters of interesting men and women not only satisfy the itch of biographical curiosity; they are, of course, an art form in their own right, and all the more interesting a one in being the only unconscious art form literature allows. Because of this unconscious element—only in rare instances does the author of the letter think he is creating a work of art—letters can reveal character in a way that diaries and journals and more self-conscious forms do not. Although she would have hated to hear it, Flannery O'Connor's letters (published in a collection edited by Sally Fitzgerald and entitled *The Habit of Being*) may outlive her novels and short stories. Sometimes a writer is radically different in his letters from his diaries. Evelyn Waugh ("Evalin Wow," in the pronunciation used by Flannery O'Connor's mother) is depressing in his *Diaries*; in his *Letters* h entertaining, winning, a pussycat.

Joseph Epstein is the editor of the American Scholar.

Well, not always or altogether a pussycat. Tov the end of World War II, in a letter to his v Waugh wrote:

> *Darling Laura, sweet whiskers, do try to writ me better letters. Your last, dated 19 Decembe received today, so eagerly expected, was a bitte disappointment. Do realize that a letter need n be a bald chronicle of events; I know you lead dull life now, my heart bleeds for it, though believe you could make it more interesting if yo had the will. But that is no reason to make you letters as dull as your life. I simply am not inte ested in Bridget's children. Do grasp that. A le ter should be a form of conversation; write a though you were talking to me.*

One winces at the thought of receiving such a ter but wonders about the letter—"dated 19 cember received today"—that occasioned it. A letter from a beloved is a dampening thing. Fine tax may never have won fair lady, yet a letter str with solecisms, clichés, dreary dullness can ca the heart of a fastidious lover to beat much n slowly. One wants in a letter from someone loves wit, passion, elegance, a show of good se and whatever other qualities are required to firm one's own splendid instincts in matters of heart.

Excellent love letters are magnificent to rec but excruciatingly difficult to write, precisely cause so much is riding on them. The best th have ever written were to women I had never s

took place while I was in the army, where, as ·ibbling man, I sometimes played Cyrano, with- aid of balcony or long nose, by writing love let- to the wives and girlfriends of barracks mates se long suit was not *belles lettres*. Whether my s as a professional letter writer, and *epistolaro*, responsible for binding up or breaking down ionships I never learned. I saw in the writing ose letters the opportunity to exercise my neo- e craft, to aid my fellows in arms, and in a of peace to serve my country.

f love letters, then, I can say from my brief and tly irregular experience that I would rather write than read them—at least when it comes to r people's love letters. Cornell University Press recently issued *The Love Letters of William Mary Wordsworth*.* Sticky stuff, these letters out to be, narrowly connubial in their range nterests, vesuvial in the unrelenting flow of their essions of affection. "O My William!" writes y, "it is not in my power to tell thee how I e been affected by this dearest of all letters— as so unexpected—so new a thing to see the thing of thy inmost heart upon paper that I was e overpowered . . ." and so forth. To which iam responds, "O my blessing, how happy was learning that my letter had moved thee so deep- and thy delight in reading had if possible been e exquisite than mine in writing . . ." and so n. It gets thicker: "every day every hour every nent makes me feel more deeply how blessed are in each other, how purely how faithfully how ntly, and how tenderly we love each other . . ." so forth. But then they were called Romantics, en't they?

lo one ever called Gustave Flaubert a Roman- He was, I believe, a great letter writer but of ecial kind: a man who writes highly interesting rs while himself remaining consistently unat- tive. And nowhere is Flaubert less attractive on the subjects of sex and love, on which his rs might bring a blush to the wrinkled cheeks in octogenarian Istanbul procuress. Coarse does begin to describe Flaubert. Of an evening with rostitute, he writes to a friend that "I fired four nds with her." To Louise Colet, his mistress, he es an early letter with his characteristically vy-breathing passion:

> *Adieu, I seal my letter. This is the hour when, alone amidst everything that sleeps, I open the drawer that holds my treasures. I look at your slippers, your handkerchief, your hair, your portrait, I reread your letters and breathe their musky perfume. If you could know what I am feeling at this moment! My heart expands in the night, suffused with a dew of love!*
>
> *A thousand kisses, a thousand, everywhere—* everywhere.

Edited by Beth Darlington. $17.95.

DECLARATIONS of love in letters not addressed to oneself tend to be unseemly, boring, slightly discomfiting, like witnessing an aged couple necking. I would rather read a man making an epistolary appeal for a loan than declaring his love. And there has been no lettristic shortage of loan requests. The young Benjamin Disraeli, in the first of two volumes of his letters recently published by the University of Toronto Press,* puts the touch on very neatly when, in writing to his friend Benjamin Austen, he closes: "If you refuse me, the remembrance of past favors will not alter my feelings towards you, but I candidly declare that the injury which it will occasion me, will, tho' I hope not irreparable, be very great." That is nicely done. E. E. Cummings could put on the touch with comedy and dash, going, so to say, right for the wallet, as in this letter to his friend J. Sibley Watson:

> *as Plato forgot to say to Aristotle I'm trying to borrow money. This would be just simply lousy news in the best of millenniums; and merely much worse if the borrower could offer security collateral or whathaven'tI, instead of a vague possibility of inheriting 2 or 3 thousand dollars at some semicolon of a soi-disant world's hertory when half a hen's arse might well be worth its hollowness in hippopotami: however, honesty is the best poverty, as Aristotle immediately answered*

No list of writers notable for putting the touch on family and friends would be complete without mention of James Joyce, a schnorrer supreme. "If you don't give us some money," he writes to his brother Stanislaus, "we must starve." To his mother he writes: ". . . I suppose I must do another fast. I regret this as Monday and Tuesday are carnival days and I shall probably be the only one starving in Paris." And, asking Stanislaus to borrow for him: "If you cannot do something at once to help me over this month I do not see how I can live." The lingering impression of James Joyce's letters is of much touchy—especially on poor Stanislaus—and very little feely.

The letters of Marx and Engels—in a recent selection edited by Fritz J. Raddatz**—reveal Karl Marx, ignoring the advice of Polonius, perpetually a borrower being, and without either Disraeli's subtlety or Cummings's wit. "Dear Engels! . . . I am short of money." "Dear Engels! You will greatly oblige me by sending the money immediately if possible." "Dear Engels! Your postal order was most welcome." Every idea, Nietzsche says somewhere, has its origin in autobiography, and reading the letters of Karl Marx one doesn't have to search far to find where his idea about economic determinism

* *Benjamin Disraeli. Letters.* Vols. I and II: 1815–1834, 1835–1837. $50 per volume.

** *Karl Marx–Friedrich Engels. Selected Letters.* Little, Brown. $13.95.

originated. Professor Raddatz remarks in his introduction to these letters that they have been culled from nine volumes, running between four and five hundred pages each, of Marx and Engels's correspondence. How would you like to wake to find that little set of tomes with a ribbon around it under the tree on Christmas morning?

While on the subject of disappointments, Mark Twain, whom one would have thought a wondrous letter writer, turns out to be rather a dud. Readers of *The Selected Letters of Mark Twain* are set up for this disappointment, at least in part, through the bad offices of the volume's editor, Charles Neider, who pumps Twain up well beyond capacity. Howells, Mr. Neider reminds us, called Twain "the Lincoln of our literature." I would add, "And the Shakespeare of our humor." The humor does not always come through in these letters. Twain's role-playing and philistinism, unfortunately, do. Thus he writes to Howells to tell him how superior a writer he, Howells, is to George Eliot, whose books he, Twain, simply cannot get through. He writes to the English critic Andrew Lang asking him not to judge his work by "the cultivated-class standard." Twain's real voice only rings clear in his somewhat uxorious letters to his wife, Livy, and it is at her death that his attempts at self-condolence—a hopeless project—are most moving: "I am tired and old," he writes to Howells. "I wish I were with Livy."

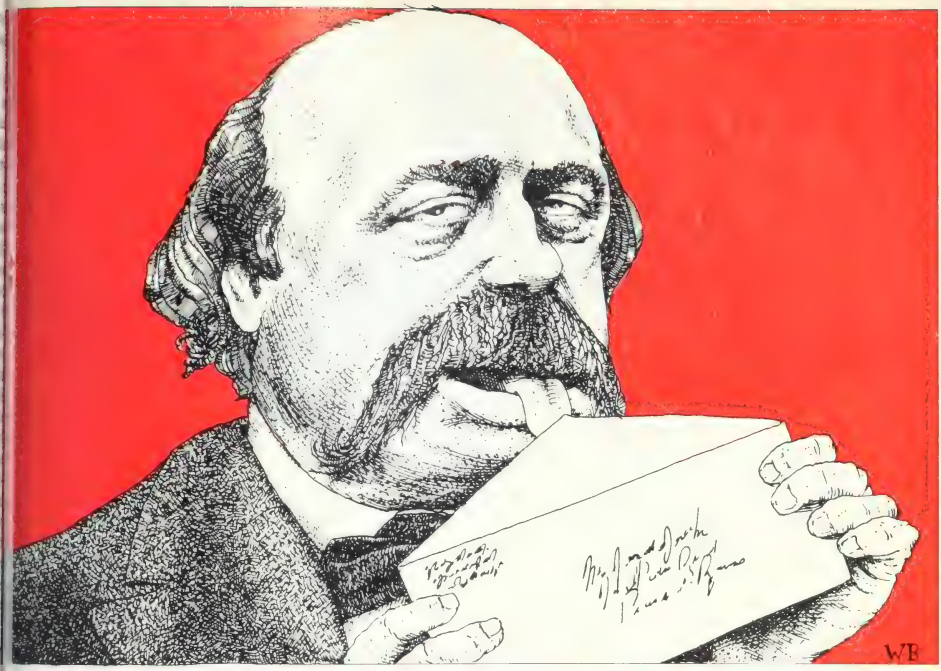
Of the various kinds of letters, surely the most difficult to write are letters of condolence. I dread writing such letters above all others, for the least falseness of feeling cries out, accusing its author of the most serious hypocrisy. Oddly, someone who was very good at writing letters of condolence or providing comfort at times of crisis was Edmund Wilson. I say oddly, because the tendency is to think of Edmund Wilson as an unfeeling man, a tendency that so many of the letters in the collection *Letters on Literature and Politics* (edited by Elena Wilson and published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux) support. The characteristic Wilson letter was a lecturette, in which he reprimanded or scolded a fellow writer. Late in life, I am told, Wilson would return his correspondents' letters with corrections in grammar and usage marked in the margins.

But Wilson had himself suffered loss, and he knew its hurt, and this lent to his letters of condolence and comfort a truth of compassion that is impressive. Thus to William Rose Benét, upon the death of his wife, Elinor Wylie, he writes: "But it's better to be cut off at the height of life with the head and heart full than to die as most people die. In Elinor's case, it leaves the impression undimmed of her almost supernatural brilliance and energy. . . . You are fortunate in this, that you had more of it than anyone else. I sometimes envied you when Elinor was alive, and in spite of the grief you must now be in and the bleakness you must be feeling I do so even now."

Easily the most magnificent writer of letters of condolence, though, is Henry James. At a man's or woman's death James could somehow formulate what had been special about the person who had died, and make of this specialness a source of comfort to his or her wife or husband, a keepsake in prose, as if James's pen portrait were a locket to be worn as a remembrance for the remainder of one's days. But James was a great letter writer generally —and in two languages. How he wrote so many beautiful letters while turning out his novels and stories, criticism and travel writing, not to speak of keeping up his social round, is itself an astonishment. "Excuse me for not propping up this impudent assertion by examples," he writes to his friend Grace Norton, after taking issue with articles she has written about George Eliot and Balzac; then he adds parenthetically: "(I haven't time—I have written ten ten notes and letters today, my correspondence is *killing* me!)" He writes, in French, to Paul Bourget, apologizing for not answering Bourget's last letter, and saying that the necessities of his own scribbling life forbid him from attending to such general questions as Bourget's letter raised. Henry James, "indefatigable alchemist," as Auden once called him, then proceeds to respond to Bourget's questions about the higher meanings of art.

Igor Stravinsky would have dealt with them differently. "Too busy right now to be able to go through all the fascinating things you mention," he writes in response to a letter from Lincoln Kirstein. Stravinsky is always too busy, for the perfectly sound reason that he was ruthless about his priorities. His art came first—also second, third, and fourth. Consequently, *Stravinsky, Selected Correspondence*,* the first of three volumes promised by its editor Robert Craft, is not the glittering book one might have anticipated, however useful it will be for scholars and future Stravinsky biographers. The maestro took care of business, and rarely lavished much attention on his letters, which, in this volume, are preponderantly about business: conducting dates, publication of his compositions, dealings with librettists, etc. Even the letters exchanged between Auden and Stravinsky are a bit dull. Only hints of the witty man Igor Stravinsky must have been peep through, as when, in a postscript to a letter to Ernest Ansermet, he instructs Ansermet to "Say *merd* from me to Geneva and its beautiful Freemasonic institutions, and I will be relieved"; or when he invites Jean Cocteau, who is planning a visit with him in Switzerland, to stay at the Hotel Byron in Villeneuve: "You will be comfortable there, and for quite modest rates will find all that you need: rooms, baths, hot and cold water, lukewarm women, boys from 8 to 13. . . ."

*Edited and with commentaries by Robert Craft. Knopf. $27.50



GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

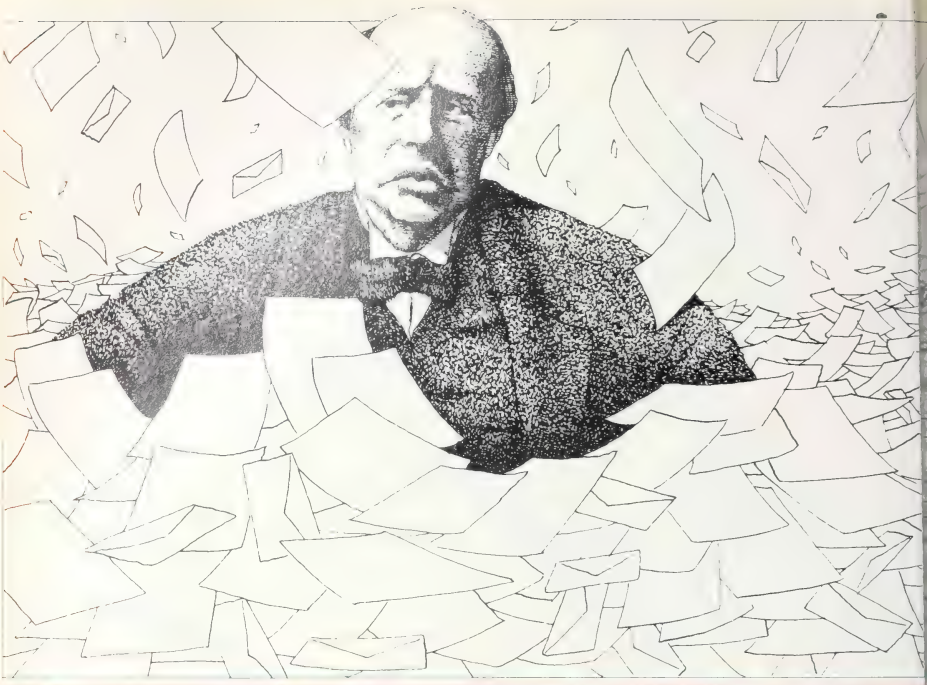
T HAS been said that one can either write books or read them but that one cannot do both. What seems truer is that one can write either books and articles or letters but one cannot do . I once expressed this sentiment to a man who e a lengthy and highly intelligent response to rticle I had published. I thanked him for his r, but told him that I was under the pressure arious deadlines and could not address myself ıe rather complicated questions his letter had d. I ended by apologizing. Of course I disap- ted him, but his letter, single-spaced and three s long, would have required a full morning to ver. The sadness is that writers want precisely responses to their work; the madness is that seem unable to find time to respond to the re- ıse.

'hen it comes to letters, who does not feel that better to receive than to give? The rub is that must give back to receive more. Does any one s of people respond more tardily to letters than other? I would be inclined to say that editorial kers are very poor in this line, being one of ı myself. There is, however, one notable excep- : H. L. Mencken, who as editor of the *Ameri- can Mercury* and for years afterward used, like the old neighborhood dry cleaners, to give same-day service, answering every letter on the day he received it. Very impressive, that, especially since all of Mencken's letters had at least one lovely touch. "All the usual hypocrisies," is the way he signed off many of his letters to old friends. But scientists are as a class the poorest of all letter writers; and they win this laurel, in my experience, by default—that is, by generally not answering letters sent to them at all.

Letters from the young, unless they are witty, are usually not very pleasant to receive, for they are frequently filled with requests for favors or unanswerable questions. I would not have minded receiving letters from the youthful Alfred Lord Tennyson, who was witty and wise beyond his age. The first volume of *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson** contains a letter from Tennyson at Cambridge to his aunt, complaining about mathematics, calling the subject "annihilatingly barbarous," and adding: " 'There is no pleasure like proof' cries the Mathe-

William Bramhall

* Vol. I, 1821–1850. Edited by Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr. Harvard, The Belknap Press. $30.



HENRY JAMES

matician. I reverse it, 'There is no proof like pleasure.' " But even the great German writer Heinrich von Kleist can be a bit much when young. In *An Abyss Deep Enough*,* a selection of his letters edited and translated by Philip B. Miller, published by E. P. Dutton, the young Kleist shows the complete self-absorption of the young. Kleist's early letters are filled with his own "life plan," and quite unanswerable sentences such as this: "Recall that I consider it my duty to take this step; no merely accidental or extrinsic circumstances can or will hinder the fulfillment of my duty, or destroy the resolve begot of a higher Reason, or unsettle a happiness that is grounded entirely within myself." Sure, kid, catch you later.

Letters from people approaching the close of life tend, understandably, to be given over to reminiscence. This can have its limitations, but what happened is almost always a more interesting subject than what is going to happen, the latter being the customary subject of the young. The worry of the old is that their letters will bore those younger than themselves. In my experience, they need not worry.

The habit of letter writing is dying out. My guess is that fewer and fewer great letter collections appear from the pens of contemporary writers cept for people who live in out-of-the-way pla Flannery O'Connor in Milledgeville, Georgia, c to mind—the telephone has increasingly done i letter as a mode of communication. The tempta in AT&T's mortal words, is "to reach out and t someone," and nowadays only transatlantic phone calls still seem financially daunting. Th in many ways a shame, and one that will doub have consequences for future generations. Wi extensive letters, for example, solidly docume biographies are less likely to be written. Bu sense is that people in general, nonliterary as as literary, write fewer letters now than they thirty years ago.

LET US now consider those letters on dently wished to write but which pruc prevented one from mailing. Everyon had it in mind to write letters of this and many have gone so far as to write them only to shy away at the postbox. It is scarcely sh ing to learn that Harry S. Truman, not a man

*$16.95.

s delicate restraint, wrote a great many of these s, though interesting that even he held back mailing them. Monte M. Poen has now col- l a number of them under the title *Strictly Per- and Confidential, The Letters Harry Truman r Mailed.** One can sense the delightful feeling ease that the mere writing of these letters must given Truman. For example, the following let- a newspaper editor whose paper ran an edi- saying that Truman, by firing Douglas Mac- ır, had chosen defeat in Korea: "The attached rial—it contains a double barrelled bare face hich I've marked with a red line." Then there s to a scholar who, Truman felt, misunderstood ole in ending World War II: "You write just he usual egghead. The facts are before you but l like to garble them." And this, alas like the s never sent, in response to a telegram from Joseph McCarthy reiterating his claim that were fifty-seven communists working within tate Department:

y dear Senator:
I read your telegram of February eleventh from no, Nevada with a great deal of interest and is is the first time in my experience, and I was t years in the Senate, that I ever heard of a nator trying to discredit his own officials. Your egram is not only not true and an insolent ap- oach to a situation that should have been rked out between man and man but it shows nclusively that you are not even fit to have a nd in the operation of the Government of the nited States.
I am very sure that the people of Wisconsin e extremely sorry that they are represented by person who has as little sense of responsibility you have.

ıere is something about writing a scorching let- o someone that seems even more satisfying than ling toe to toe and telling him off. A letter, un- a face-to-face encounter, does not allow for any ruption. Moreover, composed in tranquillity, it be finely formulated, all possibility of flaw or ır removed. Max Beerbohm provides a sterling ıple of such a letter in his essay "How Shall I d It?", a send-up of books offering models for rs for all occasions; here Max is writing to a ıber of Parliament Unseated at the Last General tion:

ear Mr. Pobsby-Burford,
Though I am myself an ardent Tory, I cannot at rejoice in the crushing defeat you have just ffered in West Odgetown. There are moments hen political conviction is overborne by personal ntiment; and this is one of them. Your loss of e seat that you held is the more striking by rea- n of the splendid manner in which the northern id eastern divisions of Odgetown have been rested from the Liberal Party. The great bulk of the newspaper-reading public will be puzzled by your extinction in the midst of our party's tri- umph. But, then the great mass of the newspaper- reading public has not met you. I have. You will probably not remember me. You are the sort of man who would not remember anybody who might not be of some definite use to him. Such, at least, was one of the impressions you made on me when I met you last summer at a dinner given by our friends the Pelhams. Among the other things in you that struck me were the blatant pomposity of your manner, your appalling flow of cheap plati- tudes, and your hoggish lack of ideas. . . .

The one person in whose behalf I regret your withdrawal into private life is your wife, whom I had the pleasure of taking in to the aforesaid dinner. It was evident to me that she was a wom- an whose spirit was well-nigh broken by her conjunction with you. Such remnants of cheer- fulness as were in her I attributed to the Parlia- mentary duties which kept you out of her sight for so very many hours daily. I do not like to think of the fate to which the free and indepen- dent electors of West Odgetown have just con- demned her. Only, remember this: chattel of yours though she is, and timid and humble, she despises you in her heart.

I am, dear Mr. Pobsby-Burford,
Yours very truly,
Harold Thistlake

People write angry letters to writers fairly frequently. The worst I ever received began, "May God castrate you," which seemed to me rather an attention-getting opening. Mencken used to receive so many angry letters that he had a response printed on postcards, which read: "Dear Sir or Madam, You may or may not be right."

I myself do not write out angry letters, but I do sometimes find myself composing them in my mind to people who, in various ways, have given me displeasure.

One such letter, it strikes me now, ought to go to that political scientist who has been reading other people's mail. "Dear Professor B.," it might begin, "You do not know me. I adore you. I must have you. Someday I shall, but not, dear man, until you can keep your elegant nose out of other people's letters. You can look forward to further letters from me; in these letters, my love, I shall describe, in detail as vivid as I can make it, the pleasures I have in store for you. These descriptions will have to do until you have eliminated this sad habit of yours, for I could never bring myself to bed with a man who engages in so degrading a practice. Meanwhile, allow your mind to play over the vast range of the complicated pleasures of the sensual domain, and never for a moment forget this—however alone you think you are, your every movement is being witnessed.

Beyond affectionately,
X

P.S.: Write if you find work." ■

Little, Brown. $10.95.



© Posy Simmonds

FELLOW TRAVELERS

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

the Volga with the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship.

NEVER did get it, what this trip was all about. I stood at the rail of the cruise ship *Aleksandr Pushkin* staring out at the vast rolling shore of the Volga. Here or there was a patch of grain, gh enough even in late July to conceal the line rows plowed straight downhill in the most n-producing way possible. And here or there skinny cow in an untidy hectare of pasture. ost of the land looked empty, unsown, un-l, uncultivated. And all around me were minds s fallow.

vas on something called the "Volga Peace ," a sixteen-day trip to the U.S.S.R. featuring -day boat ride from Rostov north up the Don, gh the Don-Volga canal, and on up the Volga to Kazan. The 160 passengers were all Amer- Most were antinuke activists and peace-group izers with Sixties-leftover looks. Others were cts of the Old Left. The peaceniks talked about , mostly in terms of atomic holocaust. The s talked about peace, mostly in terms of So-merican relations. The entire program of the e cruise" consisted in the bunch of us talk-bout peace. And the Soviet government had ded five Russian "peace experts" to talk about too.

y, July 16, 1982

WAS attracted to the Volga Peace Cruise by a half-page advertisement in the February 27, 1982, issue of the *Nation* magazine. It read, in part, "Find out for yourself s going on in the Soviet Union al and heartland as you join *Nation* this summer on an ex-citing, affordable Soviet excursion."

I have a sneaking love of the old-time Left and that compendium of their snits and quarrels, the *Nation*. Mind you, I'm a registered Republican and consider socialism a violation of the American principle that you shouldn't stick your nose in other people's business except to make a buck. Still, Wobblies, Spanish Civil War veterans, the Hollywood Ten touch the heart somehow.

But, to tell the truth, I'd never met any Old Leftists. I expected them to be admirable and nasty, like Lillian Hellman, or brilliant, mysterious, denying everything, like Alger Hiss, or—best of all—hard-bitten and cynical but still willing to battle oppression, like Rick in *Casablanca*. I did not expect them to be the pack of thirty fussing geriatrics I met at Kennedy Airport, misplacing their hand luggage, losing their way to the ladies' room, barking at the airline personnel, and asking two hundred times which gate we'd have to be at in three and a half hours.

They were progressives, all right. In between palsies of fretting, they'd tell you how wonderful the Soviet Union was: pensions were huge, housing was cheap, and they practically paid you to get medical care. Believe me, you haven't been bored until you've been buttonholed by a seventy-year-old woman who holds forth all afternoon on the perfidity of American foreign policy *and* shows you pictures of her grandchildren. These were people who believed everything about the Soviet Union was perfect, but they were bringing their own toilet paper.



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Saturday, July 17

The ad had promised excitement, and surely entering the Soviet Union would be exciting. The Russians are famous for making border crossing an exciting event. But we just stood in line for four hours. "You can understand the delay," said a lady who had complained all night about everything on the flight to Moscow. "So many reactionary forces are trying to destroy the Soviet Union." If reactionary forces are vulnerable to understaffing and inept baggage handling, they don't stand a chance at the Moscow airport.

There was only one faint thrill when we handed in our passports to the officer in the little glass passport-control booth. He was maybe seventeen, with a tunic too large around the neck and a hat too big by half. He made an awful face and shouted, "Num? Fuss num? Plas oaf burf? Dat oaf burf?"

One of my tour group members had been born in Kiev. She said her "plas oaf burf" was Russia.

"Dat oaf burf?"

"1915," she said.

"When leaf?" hollered the passport officer.

"1920."

"Reason leaf?" he yelled.

I swear she sounded embarrassed. "I don't know. My parents did it."

Then we got on a smoky, gear-stripped bus and rode past blocks of huge, clumsy apartment buildings and then more blocks of huge, clumsy apartment buildings, and then more blocks of huge, clumsy apartment buildings; through the smoggy Moscow twilight, through half-deserted streets.

"Some people," said a progressive lady with orange hair and earrings the size of soup tureens, "say the Soviet Union's depressing. I don't know *how* they can say that."

We pulled up in front of an immense glass curtain-walled modern hotel, a perfect Grand Hyatt knockoff, and I headed for the bar. It was pretty much like any bar in a Grand Hyatt. There was a big drunk man there, red-faced and bloated. He seemed to speak English. At least he was yelling at the bartender in it. "A glass of schnapps," he said. He got vodka.

"How long you been here?" I said.

"Hahahahahahaha," he said, "I'm from Fr[a]furt!"

"Scotch," I said to the bartender. "Where've [y]been?" I asked the drunk. The bartender gav[e] vodka.

"Fucking Afghanistan!" said the drunk. Afg[h]istan? Here was some excitement.

"Afghanistan?" I said, but he fell off his stool

Sunday, July 18

MY TOUR GROUP of progressives met [a]another three or four groups in the [M]cow hotel. The others were mostly pe[a]niks. I don't know how my group involved in the peace cruise or how I got put in them. They certainly weren't from the *Nation*. *Nation* prints too much anti-Soviet propagan said a potbellied man smoking a pipe with a st bend in the stem.

In fact, there was no one from the *Nation* or cruise except one assistant editor in the book-re department. The excursion ad had run, I found later, in large part because the *Nation* receive commission for each passenger it signed up. ad had listed a number of other sponsors: the lowship of Reconciliation, National Council American-Soviet Friendship, Promoting Endu Peace, Women's International League for P and Freedom, and the World Fellowship Leagu few passengers in the other tour groups were f those organizations, but most seemed to be re senting tiny peace organizations of their own. if you didn't stick a sock in their mouths right a they'd tell you all about it.

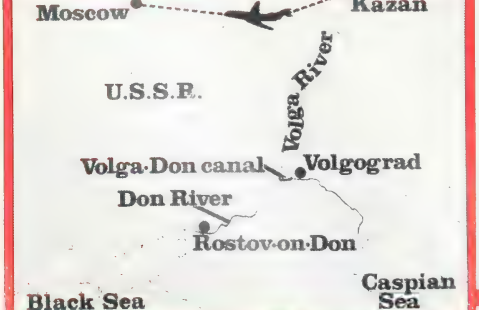
First, however, a visit to Lenin's tomb. It's dark and chilly in there, and you march aro three sides of the glass case, and it's like a visi the nocturnal-predators section at the Reptile H with your grade school class—no talking!

"He has the face of a poet," said our beau Intourist guide, Marya. He certainly does, a na crazed, bigoted face just like Ezra Pound's.

None of the progressives so much as sniffled. offended me. I can get quite misty at the Lin Monument. And I had to explain who John R was when we walked along the Kremlin wall. " that's right," said the orange-haired lady, "Wa Beatty in *Reds*." Today she wore earrings looked like table lamps. "Isn't it wonderful?" said, presenting Red Square as if she'd just kni it. "No crowds!" The square was cordoned off soldiers.

Back to the hotel for another big drink.

We spent the rest of the day on a Soviet ver of a Gray Line tour, visiting at least thirty place no interest. For the uninitiated, all Russian bu ings look either like Grand Army of the Repu



The route of the "Volga Peace Cruise."

ıorials or like low-income federal housing proj-
without graffiti. There are a few exceptions left
from the czars, but they need to have their
s mowed. Every fifteen feet there's a monument
onuments to this, monuments to that, monu-
ts to the Standing Committee of the Second Na-
l Congress of Gypsum and Chalk Workers.
ya narrated, "In the foreground is a monument
e monument in the background."
uring a brief monument lacuna, Marya said,
any of you have questions that you would like
k about the Soviet Union?"
Where can I get a . . ." But the others beat me

What is the cost of housing in the Soviet Union
percentage of worker wages?"
What is the retirement age in the Soviet Union?"
What pension do retired Soviet workers receive
percentage of their highest annual work-life
y?"
s higher education free in the Soviet Union?"
What about unemployment?"
arya answered, pointed out a few more monu-
ts, and asked, "Do any of you have other ques-
you would like to ask about the Soviet Union?"
xactly the same person who'd asked the first
tion asked exactly the same question again. I
ght I was hearing things. "What is the cost of
ing in the Soviet Union as a percentage of work-
ages?"
nd that flipped the switch.
What is the retirement age in the Soviet Union?"
What pension do retired Soviet workers receive
percentage of their highest annual work-life
y?"
s higher education free in the Soviet Union?"
Marya answered the questions again. The third
it happened she began to lose her composure. I
d hear her filling up empty places in the sight-
ıg landscape. "Look, there's a building! And
e's another! And over there are several buildings
ther! And here [sigh of relief] are *many monu-*
ts."

ıday, July 19

One of the bus questioners stood next to me as we waited to board our flight to Rostov. She looked out at the various Aeroflot planes standing on the tarmac and man-
I a statement that was at once naïve, gratuitous,
onizing, and filled with progressive ardor. "Air-
es!" she said. "The Soviet Union has thousands
thousands of airplanes!"
never did find out what this lady looked like.
was only about four foot eleven, and all I ever
was a skull-top of hennaed hair with a blur of
moving jaw beneath it. She had that wonderful
ity some people have of letting their minds run
t out their mouths.

The peaceniks, especially the older peaceniks, were more visually interesting than the progressives. Somebody ought to tell a sixty-year-old man what he looks like in plastic sandals, running shorts, and a mint-green T-shirt with Kenneth Patchen poems silk-screened on the front.

The peaceniks were sillier-acting than the progressives, too. There was a pair of Quaker ministers with us, man and wife. But they were not Quakers as one usually pictures them. They had "gone Hollywood." Imagine a Quaker who came up to you in the L.A. airport and tried to get a donation for a William Penn button. Not that they did that, but it always looked to me as though they were about to. Anyway, this couple bore different last names. When we got aboard the ship in Rostov, a passenger went to return a book to the husband.

"I'm sorry," said the wife at their cabin door. "He's not here."

"But can't I give the book to you?" asked the passenger. "It belongs to your husband."

"We're *not* the same person," said the wife.

Tuesday, July 20

Fortunately there were other people to talk to. Actually, you couldn't talk to most of them because they were Russians and didn't speak English—what you might call a silent majority. On the plane to Rostov I'd sat next to a fellow named Ivor. He spoke only a bit of English but was a good mime. He got it across that he was an engineer. I got it across that I was an American. He seemed very pleased at that. I should come and stay with his family. I explained about the cruise boat, showing him a picture of it on the brochure. I did a charade to the effect that I'd better stick close to the boat. He gave me an engineering trade magazine (in Russian, no illustrations), and I gave him some picture postcards of New York. We parted in a profusion of handshakes at the Rostov airport.

The boat stayed at the dock in Rostov until midnight Tuesday. They have plenty of monuments in Rostov, too, and tour buses were lined up on the quay. I could hear someone asking inside one of them, "What is the cost of housing in the Soviet Union as a percentage of worker wages?"

I was just being herded into that bus when someone grabbed my arm. It was Ivor. "Come on," he gestured. I escaped down the embankment. We got on a boat packed to the scuppers with Russians and went for a two-hour excursion on the Don. Ivor bought a bottle of champagne and began a labored explanation punctuated with hand-wavings and flurries of picture-drawing in my reporter's notebook.

His father had been on the front lines when the armies of the East and West had met in Germany in 1945. Apparently the Americans had liberated every bottle of alcoholic beverage between Omaha Beach and the Oder-Neisse Line and really made

the welkin ring for their Red comrades in arms. "Anglish—*poo*," said Ivor, "Francis—*poo*," but the Americans, they were fine fellows, plenty of schnapps, plenty of cognac, plenty of vino for all. And they could *drink*, those American fine fellows. So Ivor's "vada" had made him promise (point to self, hand on heart) if (finger in air) Ivor ever met American (handshake, point to me) he must buy him much to drink. *Da?* (Toast, handshake, toast again, another handshake.)

Standing behind Ivor was a giant man well into his sixties, a sort of combination Khrushchev and an old Arnold Schwarzenegger. He was staring hard at me, cocking an ear to my foreign language. He wore an undershirt and a suit coat with a line of medals out across the breast pocket. *"Deutsch?"* he asked me sternly.

"*Nyet deutsch*," I said, "American."

He beamed, I mean just *beamed*. "Ally!" he said. It was his only English word. He pulled out a wallet with what I guess were commendations and an honorable discharge. "*Amerikanskii* ally!" he said and slapped my shoulder. Eight-ounce glasses of brandy must be bought for Ivor and me.

I toasted him with *my* only Russian word, "*Tovarishch* (comrade)!" He brought forth a tiny grandson and had him shake hands with me.

"Now the little one can say he met an American," Ivor more or less explained. I toasted the big guy again. He pledged a long toast in return, and, as I understood Ivor's translation, we'd drunk to the hope that America and Russia would be allies again in a war against China.



"Isn't it wonderful?" she said, presenting Red Square as if she'd just knitted it.

I bought more cognac. Ivor bought beer. The big fellow bought even more cognac.

When the boat docked Ivor and I went to a beer hall, a basement where they lined up half-liter mugs and squirted them full with a rubber hose from four feet away. Everyone grabbed half a dozen mugs at a time and drank one after the other while standing at long wooden tables. There was no communication problem now. We discussed women ("Ah, beautiful. Oh, much trouble"), international politics ("Iraq—*poo*. Iran—*poo*"), the relative merits of socialism versus a free-market system ("Socialism—enough responsible, *nyet* fun. Capitalism—*nyet* enough responsible, plenty fun"), and, I think, literature ("*And Quiet Flows the Don*—*poo*, to long"). Then we went to another bar on top of Russian tourist hotel and had even more to drin I didn't want to let my side down. And there we Ivor's father's feelings to be considered.

Ivor and I embraced, and I staggered back to m cabin to pass out. The woman with her brains b tween her teeth was standing at the top of the gan plank. "I hope you're not one of those people who going to see the Soviet Union through the bottom a vodka glass," she said.

The Enemy Among Us

OF COURSE, we had plenty of Russian aboard the boat, too. There were five o the advertised experts. I'll change the names in case some re constructed quote or pe etic exaggeration of mir is misconstrued to mea that one of these Soviet might be "turned" by th CIA. No one deserves t be pestered by surrepti tious Yalies who couldn get into law school.

Two of the experts were really journalists Natalia was a pleasant blonde woman of abou forty. She didn't hav much to say. Nikolai wa a sturdy guy in his mid thirties, completely West ern in dress and manner He had lived as a foreig correspondent in Switz erland and Austria fo seven years, wore a bus jacket like any other for eign correspondent, an was as bluff and hard drinking as any newspaper man. I gathered thi wasn't much of an assignment.

A third expert, Orlonsky, was a sinister-lookin type with a half-Russian, half-Tartar face and slit like eyes. He turned out to be a bored economis from the Soviet Institute of U.S. and Canadia Studies who was along to brush up on his Englis in preparation for some academic conference he wa going to visit in San Francisco. But Orlonsky seeme to be a look-alive fellow. He wanted to talk abou America's marvelous demand-side goods-distribu tion system and did our economic institutes hav screws loose or what? Also, where did our automo bile industry go? But the Americans wanted to tal about peace and Soviet-American relations.

Two more official-expert types were Dr. Bullsho vich from the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Institut

World Economy and International Relations and
ofessor Guvov from the department of philosophy
l sociology at Moscow U. Dr. Bullshovich was a
n, dry character with a jesuitical wit that was lost
his audience. Between formal peace activities he
somewhere. Guvov was a doctrinaire buffoon
o looked like a Hereford cow and was a big fa-
ite with the progressives. "He is not a professor,"
e of the crew members told me later. "He is, you
uld call it, instructor. He should be teaching mil-
ry schools."

Besides the experts there were thirty or more of-
ers, sailors, waitresses, stewards, and cruise per-
nnel. Some of the higher-ranking crew members
oke English but usually didn't let on. They pre-
red to stare blankly when the Americans began
complain.

And the Americans did complain, the progres-
es worst of all. Between praise of the Soviet
ion it was, "It's too noisy, too rough, too breezy.
e chair cushions are too hard. And what's that
ell? This food is awful. Too greasy. Can't I order
nething else? I *did* order something else. Didn't
meone say I could order something else? I'm sure
an order something else if I want to, and, young
ly, the laundry lost one of my husband's socks.
ey're expensive socks and one of them is lost."

Translating the complaints, or pretending to, were
half dozen Intourist guides. They began to have a
unted look before we were two days out of port.

ry early Wednesday morning, July 21

When I came to, after the Ivor expedition, I stum-
ed into the ship's bar. We'd cast off while I was
leep, and motion of the boat combined with mo-
n of my gullet. I couldn't have looked well. Niko-
was sitting on a stool next to one of the Intourist
ides, a dark, serious type named Sonya. I gripped
e bar with both hands and tried to decide which
the impossible Russian soft drinks would be easi-
t to vomit. "You need vodka," said Nikolai, mo-
ning to the barmaid. I drank the awful thing.

Now," said Nikolai, "how did you get that Presi-
nt Reagan?"

"*I* voted for him," I said. "How did *you* get
rezhnev?"

Nikolai began to laugh. "I do not have this great
sponsibility."

"How are you liking the Soviet Union?" asked
nya.

"I'm not," I said.

She was worried. "No? What is the matter?"

"Too many Americans."

Sonya kept a look of strict neutrality.

"I have not met many Americans," said Nikolai.
They are all like this, no?" He made a gesture that
ncompassed the boat, winked, and ordered me an-
ther vodka.

"Not exactly," I said.

"Perhaps they are just old, a bit," said Sonya with the air of someone making an obviously fallacious argument. "But," she brightened, "they are very for peace."

"Yes," I agreed. "They are progressive. They are highly progressive. They are such great progressives I think I have almost all of them talked into defecting."

"No, no, no, no, no," said Nikolai.

Much later Wednesday morning, July 21

We docked on a scruffy island somewhere up near Volgodonsk. Most of the Americans took walks and got lost, but it was not as large an island as I could have hoped.

One of the U.S. peace experts, a pacifist from the American Friends Service Committee, got up a volleyball game against the crew. "Now let's play and let's play hard," he told the American team. "But don't forget we're playing for *fun*." The Russians trounced them.

That night the Russians took me out onto the darkened fantail, where they had dozens of bottles of beer, cheese, bread, and a huge salted fish.

Sonya was concerned about my Republicanism. "You are not for peace?" she asked.

"I during Vietnam War struggle for peace very much [talk with the Russians for a while and you fall into it too], rioting for peace, fighting police for peace, tear-gassed for peace," I said. "I am tired of peace. Too dangerous."

Orlonsky began to laugh and then shook his head. "Vietnam—too bad."

"Land war in Asia," I said. "Very bad. And some countries do not learn from an example." All of them laughed.

"And in Middle East," said Sonya, mirthfully pointing a finger at me, "some people's allies do not learn also."

"War is very bad," said Nikolai. "Maybe U.S. and Soviet Union go to war over Lebanon—ha, ha!" This seemed to be a hilarious idea. The Russians all but fell out of their chairs.

"With all of Middle East how do you pick only ally without oil?" said Orlonsky.

I said, "With all of Europe how do you pick Poland?"

"You wish to make trade?" said Nikolai.

"Also, in deal, you can have South Africa," I said.

"We will tell Reagan you are a progressive," said Orlonsky.

"P. Cheh [P.J.] was making faces at our news broadcast today. I do not think he is a progressive."

"Oh, he is a progressive," said Nikolai. "You remember, Sonya, he has almost all Americans on ship ready to defect."

Marya made a strangled noise in the back of her throat. Sonya turned very sober. "Progressives," she sighed. "Everything must be made perfect for them."

Thursday, July 22

OUR FIRST scheduled peace conference took place while we sailed through the remarkably scum-filled Tsimlyansky Reservoir. The conference coordinator was a short, broad, overvigorous American woman in her sixties. Let's call her Mrs. Pigeon so she won't sue, and also because too very much truth doesn't go with travel writing. Mrs. Pigeon was an authority on the education of children, and, in fact, had the personality of a teacher—the sort of teacher who inspires any feeling child to sneak back in school at night and spray-paint the halls with descriptions of the human love act.

Mrs. Pigeon introduced the Soviet experts and their two American counterparts, Reverend Bumphead (not his real name) and the volleyball coach, Nick Smarm (not his real name). Nick was a politician, but the sort who would run for city council in Youngstown on an antidevelopment, pro-ecology ticket. He smiled too much. The Reverend Bumphead was a young man of Ichabod Crane lank. I never caught his denomination. My guess is Zen Methodist. He was either growing a beard or else he didn't know how to shave.

Mrs. Pigeon opened the proceedings in a patronizing tone that propelled me back through twenty-five years to the vile confines of the fourth grade. The peaceniks took notes. I had a vision of newsletters, reams and reams of misstapled copier paper Xeroxed when the boss wasn't looking, spewing forth from the tepid organizations these people represented. "My Interesting Peace Voyage Through the Soviet Union"; "An Interesting and Enjoyable Visit to the U.S.S.R. With Peace in Mind"; "Not *War and Peace* but *Peace and Peace*" (one of the clever ones); "Peace in the Soviet Union and an Interesting Trip There Too." Maybe America could be bored into nuclear disarmament.

Nick Smarm began to speak. It was the standard fare. He laid the greater part of the blame for a potential international nuke duke-out on the American doorstep. What he was saying wasn't wrong, at least not in the factual citations he made. But suddenly and quite against my will I was angry. To stand in front of strangers and run your country, m country, down—I didn't care if what Nick said w generally true; I didn't care if what he said w wholly, specifically, and exactly true in every deta I was ashamed of the man. I would have bee ashamed if he were Russian and we were on th Mississippi. That big fellow with the medals dow his suit coat, my ally, he wouldn't have done such thing on the *Delta Queen*. I needed a drink.

When I returned, Reverend Bumphead from th Princeton Coalition for Disarmament was speakin He said exactly the same thing.

"Now it's time for all of us to ask Nick Smarr and Reverend Bumphead some interesting ques tions," said Mrs. Pigeon.

"Mr. Smarm," said a fat man, "now this is jus a hypothetical question, but the way you were de scribing how the arms rac is mostly the fault of th United States, couldn't I if I were a red-baite type, say—just hypothet ically now—that yo were a paid Sovie agent?" And he hastily added, "Please don't any body take my questio literally!" They took hi question literally. The fat man was smothered in literalism. Squeals o indignation wafted toward the banks of the Don.



"I hope you're not one of those people who's going to see the Soviet Union through the bottom of a vodka glass."

"What a terrible thing to say!" shrieked one of the progressive ladies. I'll bet she was annoyed—all those friends of hers acting like Soviet agents for years, and no one ever offered to pay *them*.

I was about to put in a word for Pudgy, but it was too late. He was already over apologizing to Nick.

"What is the cost of housing in the Soviet Union as a percentage of worker wages?" asked someone. Reverend Bumphead didn't know the answer to that, so it was Mrs. Pigeon who answered the rest of the questions.

Very early Friday morning, July 23

I tried to explain my patriotic seizure to Nikolai. "Wouldn't you feel the same?" But I didn't seem to be getting through.

I gave up. We had more drinks. About twenty minutes later Nikolai said to me, "I did not think Nick's speech was so interesting." He pulled a dead-pan face. "*I* can read *Pravda*."

day, July 23

Ashore in Volgograd, we were taken to Mamaev
l, where umpteen million people died defending
place when it was still named after Stalin. A
gressive chaffed me for wearing a suit and tie
in. I mean, we were going to visit a mass grave.
I skipped the ceremony and went to look at a
y-two-meter-high statue of "Mother Russia" on
hilltop, which is pretty interesting if you've never
n a reinforced-concrete nipple four feet across.
It wasn't until that afternoon, after four days on
boat, that I discovered that some ordinary tour-
had stumbled into this morass of the painfully
ing and hopelessly committed. I came back from
maev Hill and I saw a normal-looking, unagitat-
person stretched out on the sundeck in a T-shirt
m Air America, the old CIA-run Southeast Asia
line. He was one of a dozen New Mexicans, all
nds, traveling together on a private tour. Until
w they'd had a wonderful time in the U.S.S.R. They
d it was a fine place as long as you could drink
e a Russian and leave like an American. But
y'd taken this cruise without any idea of the peace
t lay in store for them, and since they'd come on
ard they'd barricaded themselves in the prome-
de deck lounge and had kept the progressives out
h loud western accents and the peaceniks away
smoking cigarettes. Smoking seems to alarm
ace activists much more than voting for Reagan.

viet-American Relations in Action

That evening at dinner time, seven or eight young Russians from the local Soviet-American friendship club were ushered on board by Mrs. Pigeon. I noticed they gobbled the at. Their president was a stiff young fellow, a fu-re first secretary of the Committee for Lies About ain Production if ever there was one. He had a itar about two times bigger than normal and a itchful mien. But the others were okay. I sat be-een Alexei, a construction foreman who looked be twelve, and Boris, an engineer (practically ev-yone in Russia is an engineer, just like our sani-tion engineers are).

Alexei wanted to talk about rock 'n' roll. His En-sh was no worse than the average *Rolling Stone* viewer's. "Abba—too nothing. Hard rock! Yay! d Zeppelin! Yay! And Kiss!! I most like—hard, rd rock! You know of Time Machine?" He was ry excited that an American recognized the name the top Russian rock group. "Good like Beatles. t is best hard rock America, yay! Is only too bad ways rock stars so many dying of too much liquor d . . ." He shot a glance at the president. " . . . d of other things."

Boris wanted to talk about cars. In his opinion ussia needed much, much faster cars. "I want fast r," he said.

The Americans wanted to talk about peace and Soviet-American relations.

We went to the boat-deck music room after dinner with Marya to help translate. There was one passenger I had not noticed before, though she had a remarkable face . . . the product of years of ill temper, pique, and petty malice. The president said, "We are thankfully welcomed of being here. English ours is not so well. But is practicing now you with more." Then each of the Russian kids introduced himself and said his profession as best he could.

The woman took aim at Alexei and said with great acerbity, "How many women construction workers are there in the Soviet Union?"

Alexei tried to answer, "In construction worker training is mostly male, men I am meaning, but is also some girls if . . ." He got no further.

"Girls?!" shrieked the old bitch. "*Girls*?! We don't call *women* girls! That's an insult!" The Russian kids stared at her, mystified. The hag turned on Marya. "You explain to them that calling women girls is a demeaning thing to do."

Marya said something placating in Russian. The president tried a halting apology, but the woman interrupted. "One thing I'd like to know," she glared at Alexei's denim trousers. "Why do young people all over Europe, even in the socialist countries, pick up that awful American popular music and those sloppy bluejeans?"

Marya made what sounded like a pained verbatim translation. All the Russian faces in the room froze into the great Russian public face—serious but expressionless, part poker face and part the face the troops made on "You'll Never Get Rich" when Phil Silvers asked for volunteers.

It isn't easy to get a sober Russian to do anything on impulse, but I took Marya by the cuff and convinced her we'd better get some beer from the bar. The room was still silent when we returned. The president wouldn't take a drink, but the rest of the Russians seemed glad enough to bury their faces in beer. The ugly woman sat smugly, still waiting for a reply. The other Americans were getting embarrassed. Finally, the woman's husband spoke up. He was wearing his running shorts and Kenneth Patchen T-shirt again. "What is the cost of housing in the Soviet Union as a . . ."

Something had to be done. I stood up. "I think it's very unfair of us to monopolize the comradeship and international goodwill of these Soviet young people," I said. "There is another group of Americans in the lounge who are eager to discuss Soviet-American relations with our guests, and . . ."

"Oh, yes!" said Marya, and she began to point to the hallway and chatter in Russian. The New Mexicans were a little surprised to see us, but their hospitality didn't falter.

"We are thankfully welcomed of being here," said the president. "English ours is not so . . . "

"The hell with that," said Tom. "Play us a song on that thing." And it was a pretty good song, and Sue Ann even got him to have a drink when he finished.

Saturday, July 24

There was another peace conference under the shade deck, and this time it was the Russians' turn to speak. I was slightly late, due to sheer reluctance. Mrs. Pigeon was opening the session. "It is better to get these answers from Soviet experts than from our press," she was saying as I walked in. I walked back out again and had a beer. Actually, I had three.

When I returned, Guvov, the buffoon, had wound up his speech and was answering a question about whether Solzhenitsyn was a bad writer or a spy too. He was wearing a hilarious pair of ersatz Levi's with TEXAS JEAN printed on a salad-plate-sized plastic patch on the ass. "Solzhenitsyn painted the Soviet Union only in dark colors," he said. The progressives clapped vigorously. "You see," said Guvov, "criticism leads to the problems of democracy."

Time for more beer.

It seemed to be dawning on a few of the peaceniks that something was askew. When I returned from the bar the second time, one of them was addressing Guvov. "A lot of the Americans on this trip have admitted the errors of American foreign policy. How come none of the Soviets have admitted any Soviet errors?"

"We don't criticize the foreign policy of our government," said Guvov, "because we hundred-percent agree with it and approve of it." The questioner gaped. But the progressives all clapped, and so did quite a few of the peaceniks.

I apologize, but this reporter did not attend any more peace functions of any kind.

Loathe Boat

THE OLD LEFTIES and the peaceniks spent most of every day talking. They were not arguing. They were not analyzing. They were not making observations. What they were doing was agreeing with each other—in feverish spasms of accordance, mad confabs of apposition, blathers of consonance. On Reagan, on th weapons freeze, on the badness of Israel, on th dangers of war, on the need for peace, on all of thi they agreed.

I watched my cabinmate write a letter to his wife It was a political exhortation. "We Americans mus repudiate the Reagan administration . . ." This t his wife of thirty years.

One, who was from the deep Midwest and looke like Millicent Fenwick, told me, "You know, if th people who put Reagan in office prevail, they're go ing to take the vote from women."

As we were going through the locks of the Don Volga canal the woman with the direct connectio between her cerebral cortex and her mouth cam nattering up beside me at the rail. "Isn't it marvel ous?" she said, staring at a gigantic black wall o concrete. "They're such wonderful engineers i the Soviet Union."

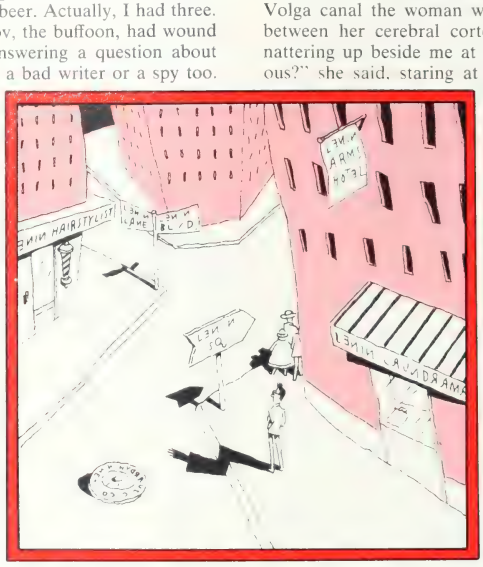
I agreed it was an im pressive piece of work "Marvelous, marvelous marvelous, marvelous," she said. She peeked ove the side. "And where *do* they get all the water?"

The Intourist guide were at wits' end, the So viet experts were getting testy, and the crew was clearly disgusted and getting into the grog ration earlier each day.

The ship's doctor, a blowsy, mottle-eyed, disbarred-looking fellow had taken to experimenting on the diarrhea symptoms half the Americans were suffering. Marya gave an elaborate burlesque of accompanying him as the translator on his rounds. The Russians would not explain the joke, but I know one peacenik had gone to him with the malady and received a laxative and a glass of 200-proof neutral grain spirits. I did not see that person again for thirty-six hours.

The Russians, when they'd had a few drinks, would repeatedly make declarations starting, "I am not an anti-Semite, but . . ." And, at least to judge by last names, many of our tour members were Jewish. One of the crew, in the most confidence-imparting stage of drunkenness, told me, "You know Brezhnev is married to a Jew. Many members of the Presidium are married to Jews. This is why we cannot be so firm with the Israelis."

But the peaceniks and the leftists were blind to this, or passed it off as anti-Zionism only. Their only



Don't miss the monument to Lenin's sister's dog.

us concern was with the CIA. They were con-
:d there must be a CIA agent aboard. I sug-
d the fat man, surely an agent provocateur. But
d decided he was okay since he'd apologized
ick. Someone said the leftists suspected me—
coat and tie. I asked Nikolai who he thought
is. "All of them," he laughed.

lay, July 25

nday I was drunk.

day, July 26

think the Russians had decided both privately
officially that these Volga peace cruisers were
nsequential people, unable to influence Ameri-
policy in any important way.
hen we docked in Togliatti, the leftists were
eager to see the Lada automobile plant there,
of the most modern factories in the Soviet
on. They were swooning to meet genuine "work-
' But it wasn't on the schedule. Our Intourist
es made a halfhearted attempt to convince the
l Intourist office to allow a tour, but it was too
a group, too many officials would have to be
acted, it would take too long to arrange, and
n. The leftists were pretty sore, and went so far
ıot to make excuses for the Soviet system this
.
ut meanwhile Nikolai had somehow got in touch
the Lada plant management and informed them
I worked for *Car and Driver* magazine. I'm
a contributing editor there, and even if I were
or in chief I wouldn't have much sway over the
, DoT, and Reagan administration executive
:rs that keep the Russians from exporting cars
is.
ut I was a representative of the real world none-
ess. And that afternoon there was a big chauf-
ed car waiting at dockside to take me, the only
nitted Republican on board, for a personal tour
he Lada plant.

the Rest of the Days on the Trip

BY TUESDAY the twenty-seventh I'd come to the end of the tour, at least as a sentient being. There were still two days left to the cruise and six days left in Russia, but I gone.

The place just wears you out after a while. There ot a square angle or a plumb line in all the coun-
Every bit of concrete is crumbling from too
ch aggregate in the mix, and *everything* is made
concrete. I saw buildings with the façades falling
that were still under construction. And every-
ng that's well built turns out to be built by some-
ly else. Moscow Airport was built by West Ger-
ns, the Grand Hyatt knockoff by the French, the Lada plant by Italians, the very boat was made in Austria.

The air pollution in the cities is grotesque. No machine seems to run well. And the whole of commerce visible on the Volga consisted of carting sand and phone poles from one port to the next.

The New Mexicans had a contest for a bottle of champagne to be won by the first person who saw a crane with an operator in it. No one won. Every building site we saw was three fourths deserted. I asked Orlonsky where the workers were, but he turned sly on me. "Perhaps they are at lunch." It was ten-thirty in the morning.

We put in at Ulyanovsk, birthplace of Lenin. Not an easy city to find your way around in. Take Lenin Avenue to Lenin Street, go straight to Lenin Square, then left along Lenin Boulevard to Lenin Place and Lenin Lane. Don't miss the monument to Lenin's sister's dog.

And no reason to find your way around, nothing there, anyway. The regular tourists and I were shitfaced drunk in the bar by noon. So we drank and told jokes: old jokes, bad jokes, dirty jokes.

The progressives could not get the Russians to stop us. Instead, they came back from the fantail and began to sing too, loud Russian songs with stamping and pounding of glasses. Then some of the peaceniks came up and then a few more, and they began to sing along. They sang "America, the Beautiful" and "God Bless America" and every verse of "The Star-Spangled Banner," a most cacophonous sound. We danced and the ship's band tried to play jitterbug. The Russians gave toasts, and we gave toasts.

And someone said, "From one bunch of sons of a bitches to another." We drank everything that came to hand, the doctor's neutral grain spirits included, and sang and danced and drank some more until we passed out on top of the tables in a triumph of peace and Soviet-American relations.

There's nothing at all to the rest of the trip except a huge gray-and-green hangover with a glimpse of the White Kremlin making my head ache in Kazan and the band piping us ashore in the morning with, most appropriately to my mind, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Then a flight to Moscow, rough weather all the way, and back to that Grand Hyatt hotel.

There was a Russian disco band in the lounge, balalaika music played on electric guitars and set to a Donna Summer beat. The New Mexicans went on to Leningrad, and I was left sitting alone in the bar waiting for my plane home a day and a half hence.

An English tourist sat down next to me. "Been here long, have you?" he said. "Been all around the country?"

"I've been to the back of the moon!" I said. "Scotch," I said to the bartender. He gave me vodka. ■



My Harvard, Your Mama

by James Wolcott

Misty memoirs by ivy-covered nostalgiacs who should have known better.

In 1986, Harvard will wheel out the cake and celebrate the 350th anniversary of its founding, a birthday that will no doubt have hundreds—thousands?—of old and distinguished alumni doddering out of the mists like sea ghosts, their eyes filmy with fond remembrance. Considering how many shots Harvard has taken across its bows in the last two decades, any occasion for harking back will probably come as a welcome respite. In the late Sixties, Harvard was condemned by the Left for being the nesting place for egghead mercenaries like Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy—the "best and brightest" who blindly led us into the big muddy of Vietnam. Harvard itself was upended by antiwar demonstrations in 1969 and 1970, a traumatic spill of anger and rhetoric and mimeographed mau-mauing curtained with drifts of smoke and tear gas. After Vietnam an ideological counterswing wasn't slow in coming. In a butterfingered attempt to emulate the success of William F. Buckley's *God and Man at Yale*, John LeBoutillier published a volume of huffy bile called *Harvard Hates America*, an extended snit in which this current congressman and future leader of the free world chastised the college for harboring all sorts of subversive rabble: commies, atheists, unbra'd libertines, capering gays. With a shudder of distaste, LeBoutillier drew down the curtain and left Harvard to its st[ill] omite ruin.

Whether the attacks against Ha[r]vard were lodged from the Right or Left, the thrust of the accusation was the same: that Harvard was a snob haven of crass, unfeeling el[i]tism. In recent years, however, a new charge has been brought before the docket. Harvard is now being reprimanded not for being lofty above it all but for succumbing to the noise and slack discipline that bedevil the common ruck of American colleges.

Writing in the September 19[82] *Esquire*, Timothy Foote—Harvard '49—describes a Harvard that seems all too shabbily familiar: a place of blaring radios, crowded libraries, breeze courses, and coed-dorm hysterics. ("[A] student would often return from the library to find his mattress out in the hall, sometimes with a note: SORRY TO KICK YOU OUT.") Stripped of its pretension, Timothy Foote's Harvard does not sound all that different from the small state college I attended in Maryland, where the dorm halls were thronged with jocks thwacking one another with lacrosse sticks, and stereo speakers rumbled with the ten-ton thumping of (I'm ashamed to recall) Grand Funk Railroad. Pulled fire alarms would send students drowsily shivering out into the frosty night, many of the girls embarrassed to be caught in their fuzzy slippers and night creams. The[se] were the days! And probably still are.

But romantic myths seldom go down without a struggle, and as 1986 approaches a number of books have emerged to wreathe Harvard—and, to a lesser measure, Yale—in incense curl of nostalgia. Among them: *Our Harvard*,[1] *Sons of Harvard*,[2] and *My Harvard, My Yale*[3] soon to be followed by the controversial *Your Harvard, Your Mama*[4]

[1] Taplinger, $19.95.
[2] Morrow, $13.50.
[3] Random House, $15.
[4] Flaming Spear Press, $13.95.

e collections of reminiscences
t exactly offer Charles and Se-
an of *Brideshead Revisited*
ning about beneath a lemon-
ent moon, but they do cast a
ing glance back to a time when
dew seemed to hang a little
ier on the leaf. Of course, col-
nostalgia depends on a sense
rretrievable loss, of footballs
ing down endless corridors, of
tuous youth now tempered and
Such nostalgia also requires a
in removal from the toss and
t of urban life. A volume en-
My Columbia, My Barnard
d be too city-bound to sum-
up that nostalgic sense of ten-
/oung lives tentatively climbing
ie ivy. Its settings lack a certain
mnal hush and crinkle.

s strolls through the recent and
past, these books are at best a
success. Fitful, because one of
problems with anthologies—es-
lly autobiographical antholo-
—is that they tend to flush the
s out of the woodpile. Charac-
who would be a yawning hor-
n an elevator or stalled taxi are
enly given free rein to pull ev-
stray wisp of lint out of their
tories and embellish them into
hanies. *My Harvard, My Yale*,
d by Diana Dubois, is modeled
he 1979 collection *My Oxford, Cambridge*, edited by Ann
aite and Ronald Hayman.
re *Oxford/Cambridge* featured
ributions by Thom Gunn, An-
Wilson, and Sir John Betjeman,
ard/Yale has to make do with
iam Proxmire, Michiko Kaku-
and the debonair but sincere
es "World" Atlas (" 'Mom!' I
1 . . . 'There's a course by Rob-
owell.' "). Not all of the con-
tors to the *Oxford/Cambridge*
acquit themselves well—Arian-
tassinopoulos comes across as a
h-winged silly (". . . at the be-
ing was not the Serenade, but
Word—buzzing insistently and
mes gloriously in the ears")—
they do seem capable of being
e comic, more evocative, more
inct.
ie Yalies and Harvies aren't near-
dab. For example, the memoir-
and television critic Michael J. Arlen (Harvard, '52) sets into motion self-generating sentences in which the clauses mosily intercopulate, bringing forth monsters. "I have always told myself, and anyone else who would listen [open the door, cabbie, I'm getting out!], that I had a wonderful time at Harvard, which means, as I suppose such statements usually do, that I existed in a condition of intermittent, post adolescent depression, interrupted now and then by passing moments of vague spiritual exaltation or by sexual overexcitement, or both." Or neither.

John Simon's contribution to *Our Harvard* may also have some readers setting their snooze alarms. When not recounting attempts to blemish the virtue of Radcliffe girls, Simon (Class of '46), the well-known critic and language scold, travels rather too confidently from droopy puns —"Fencing was abolished too; foiled again. I went out for crew. . . ." —to even droopier clichés—"Living in the shadow of the draft, one tended to bite off more courses than one could chew." After such dust-gathering, it hardly revives the spirit to reach the opening of Mr. Simon's penultimate paragraph: "But perhaps I myself have begun to ramble. I could keep piling up recollections without adding substance and definition to this already diffuse memoir." *Don't threaten us*, one scribbles in the margin. And not incidentally, one of the difficulties in reading and writing about these reminiscences is that one is forever writing the word "one."

One felt this, one learned that, one reached for one's whatever. All of that woolly oneness tends to cocoon the reader in a snug, nodding tedium.

UNQUESTIONABLY the champion of vague, wordy oneness in these books is the writer and socially committed psychiatrist Robert Coles (Harvard, '50), who has the shameless cookies to make appearances in both *Our Harvard* and *My Harvard, My Yale*—as if his college experience were so rich it couldn't be contained in just one anthology! The opening sentences in his *Our Harvard* chapter are an orgy of platitudinous oneness.

> *As many college graduates settle into middle age they get rather wistful about those four years spent acquiring "an education." One hears from them (from oneself!) the not especially original observation that lectures and reading and, not least, the sheer expanse of time devoted to various kinds of intellectual inquiry are, in their important sum, far too valuable and unique to be set aside (occasionally the bitter word "wasted" is summoned) for young people of, say, eighteen or twenty.*

When not stating the obvious at dribbling length, Coles portrays himself as a toiling and raw-boned pioneer, the Abraham Lincoln of troubled psyches, and in these two contributions he spends much time smoothing back his cowlick and grinning bashfully back at his former self. Robert Coles finds the young Robert Coles an endearing lad, but a bit rough and wanting.

> *. . . the nearer I got to Professor Miller's office, the more I knew I wanted to talk with him badly, and just as badly wanted to let him know how thoughtful and discerning and (very important) well read I was. I'd learned at least to notice that kind of egotism, to condemn myself with my grandfather's Calvinist broadsides—but then, strangely, to go about my business, content in the knowledge, I suppose, that I'd been self-critical. . . .*
>
> *I was "sincere," I suppose. I even think it fair to say I was a bit ethically sensitive. . . . But I was also (and who can ever not to some extent be?) a self-centered, posturing, all too calculating young man, eager to be liked and thought intelligent and patted approvingly. . . .*
>
> *I felt ashamed of myself as I compared my nervous reticence to the outgoing good humor, the relaxed cordiality of that woman, that youth. I began to judge myself a creep. . . .*
>
> *The next week, I started out a bit studiously and stiffly, I fear.*

On and on Coles rambles, flogging himself with a wet noodle, a barefoot boy with his head in the clouds. When his eyes begin to pop in wonderment, he's not so much Abe Lincoln as John-Boy Walton with a couple of highfalutin books tucked into his overalls.

To Coles's credit, he is one of the few contributors who writes with feeling and detail about the influence of his teachers. Most of the others simply tick off the names of distinguished profs as if they were infielders on the All-Star team, and certainly no one in these pages casts as long and imposing a shadow as does the great critic and editor F. R. Leavis in the Cambridge section of *My Oxford, My Cambridge*. But even in tribute Coles can't resist making a pious muck of things. In *My Harvard, My Yale*, Coles pays homage to the dedication and insight of his teacher Perry Miller, "who introduced me to the Puritan divines as well as a good number of other religious thinkers. . . ." Perry Miller and the Puritan divines also make an appearance in Coles's *Our Harvard* chapter, their parts rather too obviously padded. "[Perry Miller] taught me, starting in my sophomore year, about the Puritan Divines, those fiercely moral, God-obsessed, dour, driven (but also wonderfully energetic, willful, self-sacrificing) people who wanted to connect the prophets of Israel (Isaiah and Jeremiah and Amos), not to mention Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples, with the harsh, demanding social and economic realities of colonial America, its New England division."

That's about as awkward and tone deaf a sentence as I've ever read from a professional writer, and, really, isn't there something *vulgar* in Coles's show of learning and moral seriousness? He parades those Puritans and prophets across the page as if they were muttering extras from a Cecil B. DeMille film, bearing his conscience to Calvary. Perhaps it's just irritable me, but I also find myself wincing with annoyance when Coles, in that same chapter, makes reference to "the isolated and forlorn Emily Dickinson, who traveled nowhere and knew no one, it seemed, and yet held the whole world in her mind's hands and gave it to us unforgettably." There's something wet and icky about all these sighing flights of reverence. Robert Coles's goodness is weirdly unclean.

Aside from Christopher Buckley's riff about weenies in *My Yale* (weenies were chronic overachievers: "There was a girl who studied even while walking between classes; when it rained, she covered her books in large plastic baggies so she could continue despite. When at graduation she was awarded the Warren Prize for the highest scholastic standing and it was announced she had gotten *thirty-six* A's over the years, she was enthusiastically booed"), the only patch of writing I truly enjoyed in these Ivy League chronicles was Alison Lurie's account of her days as a Cliffie in *My Harvard, My Yale*. Pointedly entitled "Their Harvard," Lurie's memoir tartly begins: "Not mine, certainly. For Radcliffe students in my time the salient fact about Harvard was that it so evidently was not ours." And throughout the article Lurie's former status as an outsider gives her observations a rue-sharpened bite. After noting that as students at Radcliffe "we were 'girls' and would be girls at forty, while every weedy Harvard freshman was an honorary 'man,' " Lurie is careful to observe that being girls didn't necessarily bring out the courtly best in those weedy men. "Even as girls our status was low: The fashionable dogma was that we were all what would now be called 'dogs'—ugly, charmless grinds."

Although Lurie doesn't devote all of her attention to the docile circumspection of her fellow Cliffies (she writes of drunken instructors conking out at their desks, of esoteric courses on folktales and cartography), it's this feminist edge that makes her essay distinctive. It comes as a tonic break from all the tousled boyishness that dominates most of these reminiscences, "the nipping and eager airs" that romped a[cross] Stephen Dedalus as he made [his] stroll through *Ulysses*. In Amer[ica] John Updike has remarked, a n[ovel] is a failed boy, but most of the co[n]tributors to *Our Harvard* and *M[y] Harvard, My Yale* come acro[ss] *successful* boys. Giving off an [ex]pensive pink shine, they carr[y] like God's gift to pinstripes, [so] confident that the highest rung [on] the ladder are theirs for the g[ra]ing. Smooth palms they possess [and] star-cast eyes.

Indeed, the most silly-boot[h] these books—*Sons of Harvard*, [by] Toby Marotta—is an unwitting [ode] to the bittersweet delights of [the] scale boyishness. Subtitled *Gay [Men] from the Class of 1967*, *Sons of Harvard* tracks the lives of ten g[ay] who have shed the straight life [like] a snakeskin and are off being [so] free and dishy. " 'Get in,' he [says] macho staccato, soft voice. As [it] al, he was wearing a white T-[shirt] and looking like a rumpled [Jeff] Hunter." The "he" of that sent[ence] is Marotta's classmate Ben, w[ho] into songwriting "and next to [sex] was most enamored of recreati[onal] sex." Although Marotta is anx[ious] to stress that he himself has a st[eady] —a lover named Rusty who's d[ark] and reeks of the exotic East ("I c[an] smell the sweet residue of c[ocoa] seeping through the pores of [his] olive skin")—he isn't above sn[eak]ing a little recreational sex on [the] side. Indeed, Marotta's interview techniques will have journa[lism] teachers all across the country g[oing] ing and going white at the gills. [For] Marotta, an interview is simply [the] first flicker of candlelight befo[re] night of sweet amour: "In the m[ore] light we continued the explora[tion] of each other's bodies I had be[gun] after our interview the night [be]fore." And from Sandy, Mar[otta] makes his way to David, ano[ther] former classmate. "As I had fo[und] with Sandy, verbal intimacy [led] slowly but surely to physical [in]macy. We pulled each other's clo[thes] off, made love with the familia[rity] of old school chums. . . ." It's [the] Ricardo Romantico school of [cre]ative interviewing.

What makes *Sons of Harv[ard]*

a giggle is the contrast between book's beefcake action and the er's cuff-shooting attempts at and class. When not playing hmaker ("Inside, Mario daz- Ben with his smooth cha ..."), Marotta chides his fel- gays for not being political igh and employs the most up- ate cant to explore their psy- ogical misgivings. Gay men in book aren't torn or uneasy, re "conflicted" and suffer from ol' debbil "commitment anxi-

apdash as *Sons of Harvard* is, oes suggest that the real buzz it the Harvard mystique is not t goes on in its dorms and class- as but what goes on *afterward*, the diplomas are in hand. One oby Marotta's classmates writes: ite frankly, Toby, I just pretend now what I'm doing and make he new classification structure the merit system of the Michi- personnel system] as I go along. got people convinced that I'm iant. Harvard—the name—sure s." Harvard, the name, does c like a golden wand on im- sionable foreheads. But it's also connections students make at vard that illumine their future s like so many lights on a run- something James Fallows) alludes to in *Our Harvard* n he comments that "the Old network of the *Crimson* has a help in times of trouble in career." (A former speechwriter President Carter, Fallows has n had trouble locating office sup- .) Skating through these books, In't feel that I had missed much pending my two college years in the sticks, but I did come y wanting to know more about these PCs (privileged charac-) orchestrated their contacts graduation to snare their places siness, government, journalism. ppose I wanted a taste of some he doubt and vanity and cun- that went into Frederic Ra- el's *The Glittering Prizes*, his onal study of an incestuous set Oxbridge nasties. Where these ks don't take you is beyond nos- a. ■



Who Was Leslie Fiedler?

by Hugh Kenner

The battle continues between literature and the man who wants it dead.

WHO WAS Leslie A. Fiedler? Once upon a time, sighed the Mock Turtle to Alice, I was a real turtle; and once upon a time, says Leslie Fiedler (b. 1917; Ph.D., U. Wisc. 1941), I was a real professor, almost. But I never *quite* believed in it.

Ah, ah, those days, those days! In '41, straitjacketed in his new doctorate, the burly Fiedler was bundled by implacable Fate into the train that would haul him off kicking and fuming to the academic Gulag in Montana. Folklore has cherished and doubtless improved the scene at his departure: the sighs of commiseration on the platform, the indomitable leonine head at the coach window, its defiant shout through roars of escaping steam: "I'll publish my way out in five years!" (Tactical delinquencies stretched the years to twenty-three.)

What Fiedler was supposed to do in Montana was what any English Ph.D. is supposed to do anywhere: Uphold Standards. Since none of the students has ever heard of the standards, you have to lay them down before you can start to uphold them. The students don't come from homes where Shakespeare and Dickens and Mark Twain are read, since by Fiedler's reckoning there are no such homes. These authors, long ago mass entertainers, are now read only in classrooms, where they are part of High, i.e., compulsory, literature.

What is read in the absence of compulsion is (make your own list). We learn in *What Was Literature?** what the list was for Fiedler's generation: "Zane Grey, Edgar Rice Burroughs or Margaret Mitchell." By classroom norms, to take plea-

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* Simon & Schuster, $14.95.

Ed L. Nowak

sure in such is "shameful or regressive." One is *required* to take pleasure in Shakespeare et al., and kids soon learn to fake it. Thus are Standards transmitted, with the distinction they imply between high literature and low.

The academic's other obligation is to publish his way out of wherever he commenced by getting stuck, until he arrives at a desirable place. There he publishes his way *up*, or else takes the golden years easy by swearing off ink altogether. Publishing means assembling leaden sentences under titles like "Archetype and Signature" or "In the Beginning was the Word: *Logos* or *Mythos*" (actual Fiedler titles) for journals unread save by promotion committees (affinity for the wrong journals was one thing that slowed Fiedler).

The time he is not spending in this joyless pursuit he is supposed to spend exhorting captive classes to take joy in *Silas Marner*. Does he go to the movies? Watch sitcoms? Late at night, does he reach for a handful of easy joy like *Cujo*? If he does, he lets no one hear of it. A preacher's wife's recreations in Sodden, Tennessee, are not more circumscribed.

His abnegation has negligible effect on the taste of the public, which goes on preferring pictures to words and vulgar words to subtle. Yet he and his colleagues are financed by that same public: "by a society which considers them part of the 'professional' cadre that turns raw English majors into the next generation of fully-credentialed critic-pedagogues, capable of training a third generation, etc., etc."

This picture, though, is already a little old-fashioned; in particular, it omits the salient development of the Forties and Fifties, the "broadening" of the curriculum. "Formerly despised modernists" were let in, "along with certain American writers hitherto neglected in the academy." The sole result, says Fiedler, was to turn these writers, too, into difficult and uplifting classics, "like the *Aeneid*," and "once started, the process never stops. What we have done for the novels of the nineteenth century we can do for those of the twentieth, whether *Herzog*, *V.*, *The End of the Road*, *Portnoy's Complaint* or *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

"Finally (*mea culpa!*) such books come to seem as hermetic, esoteric and inert as *The Faerie Queene* itself. . . ." "In the end, the institutionalized taste of the late twentieth century regards as substandard almost everything which naïve and uninstructed readers are likely to recognize as a 'story' or a 'poem.' But this means in effect the exclusion of anything which the children of such readers can comprehend, even after they have entered college, without the aid of a qualified teacher."

THIS account makes hilarious reading, much as does the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*, from which Fiedler has learned some things about the persuasiveness of zestful narrative. With his account of what professors really do, compare Gulliver on lawyers:

> *For example. If my neighbour hath a mind to my cow, he hires a lawyer to prove that he ought to have my cow from me. I must then hire another to defend my right,* [and] *. . . my lawyer, being practiced almost from his cradle in defending falsehood; is quite out of his element when he would be an advocate for justice, which as an office unnatural he always attempts with great awkwardness, if not with ill will. . . . And therefore I have but two methods to preserve my cow. The first is, to gain over my adversary's lawyer with a double fee; who will then betray his client, by insinuating that he hath justice on his side. The second way is for my lawyer to make my cause appear as unjust as he can; by allowing the cow to belong to my adversary; and this if it be skilfully done, will certainly bespeak the favour of the bench.*

All this is being explained to a highly intelligent horse, whose qualifications for doubting it are nil. Swift's reader is apt to be disoriented because he forgets how much he knows that the horse does not, notably the long history of Western jurisprudence, with the aid of w[hich] we can justify its institutions ag[ainst] an adducer of particular abuse[s]

Swift's trick is not to let you t[ake] of history. Where Fiedler goes [in] one better is in preempting the[ir] torical account as well. No so[on]e has he uncurtained a new tablea[u] his chamber of horrors than h[e] launched on a brisk account of [how] its protagonists came to be fr[ozen] in those particular positions.

Early in this process he slips [to] us an article of faith, that "the [cul]ture of the United States [was] f[ree] the beginning 'popular' beneat[h] thin overlay of imported Euro[pean] elitism."

He goes on: "Our national *[My]thos* is a pop myth and our [Re]olution consequently a pop rev[o]tion." It was "cued by a b[ad] dream"—"grown men dressing [up] as Indians and dumping into Bo[ston] Harbor that supreme symbol of [de]fete European civilization, Br[itish] tea"—and the boy's dream had t[o be] subsequently equipped with ph[i]sophical apologies and "the h[ol]falutin phrases of the Declara[tion] of Independence."

This sounds very like his acco[unt] of how *Slaughterhouse-Five* [is] fared in the classroom: a b[ad] dream onto which professors [put] chic semiotic jargon. In either [case] it is in the dream that he loc[ates] authenticity. If only our men [and] would linger amid such drea[ms] Pausing to register for future [use] the query whether by Fiedler's [own] showing the impulse to abst[ract] from the dream isn't an equally [au]thentic American custom, we co[me] to his statement of what is centr[al] American: "a 'revolutionary' mo[od] of politics and culture, challeng[ing] to all civilizations with graveya[rds] or museums to defend—to wh[om] therefore, the past is reassuring [and] the future a threat."

That puts in lively words a [fa]miliar whim: that Americans [are] uniquely disencumbered of the p[ast] the better to welcome nobody kn[ows] what. Such people exist, to be su[re] I have even met them in disciplin[ary] history-crazed Germany. But no [so]*ciety* of such people, it is safe to s[ay] exists or has ever existed: least

in America, where traditions of
test against alteration—*any* al-
ation—run from *Walden* clear to
New Yorker, where rural South-
ers and New Englanders live in
ial architectural museums, and
ere an autochthonous art form,
western, celebrates in clear-
ted timelessness the rituals of a
thical but optically documented
t.

Let's call on a new witness, Rob-
Nisbet, who writes in *Preju-
es**:

'Man is a time-binding creature.
ing with the past is vital to in-
idual and society alike." Lest we
niss him as a sentimentalist, Nis-
is quick to reprove *nostalgia*,
best a rust of memory, often a
ease," which "makes of the past
ornucopia of anodynes and fan-
s" and betrays itself by isolating
articular slice of the past where
its golden oldies congregate: the
)0s perhaps, the 1920s.

CONFINED to the same room under Queensberry rules, Robert Nisbet and Leslie Fiedler would talk past h other for hours. Nisbet be-
es in the authority of the past: tradition. He does not attribute genius any wish to break with past; rather, to rediscover "the rit of the best of the past despite orts of the establishment . . . mere-to freeze or ritualize the past." e enthusiasms on which he casts skeptical eye are generally crys-ized into *ideas*, with names like enation, Technology, Originality. *Prejudices* gives a few pages h to seventy such topics, ar-ged in alphabetical order because order will do.

Fiedler's interest in ideas is com-atively slight (in his youth, he is us, he entertained some radical es but got tired of them). Myth dream, the surging of arche-es in the semiconscious: such ces of fantasy and folklore pre-upy him (and are never men-ned by Nisbet). And where Nis- likes being tethered to a topic nd which he can ruminate all

Harvard University Press, $17.50.

the golden afternoon, periodically dropping an aphorism ("Woe to the misguided who set out to be original, for verily they will produce a two-headed calf"), Fiedler prefers the bull elephant's headlong progress, slam-bang through straw villages and their shrieking natives toward that ultimate waterhole in the sky, a place whose deeps give back the lurid reflections he calls America's Inadvertent Epic, and of which the second half of his book presents, if not a deep drink, a plausible mirage.

Having complementary limitations, these are good men to read in conjunction. Against Fiedler's epiphany of the Boston Tea Party, grown men in Indian costumes, "a boy's dream" ideologized later, we can weigh Nisbet's belief that all revolutions are *incited* by ideologues, roused to frenzy by the sight of a government grown weak.

The granting of "reforms" is one mark of a weak government. "The position of the American colonists of all classes was much better in 1770 than it had been several decades earlier," Nisbet says. "But such improvement only quickened the desires of the pamphleteers which for a combination of religious and secular reasons had reached apocalyptic intensity by the 1760s, with millennium-by-revolution [their] increasingly ecstatic dream . . ."

Long afterward, one of the ideologues, John Adams, wrote that the revolution "was in the hearts and minds of the people," and "substantially effected before hostilities commenced." That's closer to Fiedler's view of it, though not close enough, since no more than Nisbet does Adams allude to the bizarre detail Fiedler seizes on, the Indian costumes in Boston harbor. Though Fiedler doesn't *dwell* on that detail, it's a clue to his phantasmagoria.

How to read the Revolution is crucial to his sense of American academe's plight and what's to be done about it. To demonstrate the irrelevance of imported and aristocratic "standards," he needs a pop America, different in essence from any other society. Nisbet demurs. All revolutions, he thinks, are alike,

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and at bottom unnecessary (he's persuasively sharp about the idea that "history" ever renders anything necessary). Ours, we gather, is a society like other societies, disintegrating as others have disintegrated, from confusion, from inflation, from loss of nerve. But No!, cries Fiedler in thunder, it's been a fructive and *necessary* disintegration. What's been disintegrating is an irrelevance, an imposed crust, represented in college curricula by what elderly professors call "English as we have known it."

That, he exults, is dead. "It began dying at the moment that people like me were permitted to join the profession. I am not proposing, as some have charged, to 'open the gates to the barbarians,' since I *am* a barbarian, already within the gates. It becomes me therefore to urge that, having nothing to lose, we venture to find out what might be gained by abandoning our last and dearest snobbism, the conviction that print is inherently superior to movies and TV, even though everyone must presumably be taught (by *us*) to read words on a page, whereas no one has to be instructed in reading images on the screen."

This does not mean courses in "cinema," with their "jargonizing about 'montage' and 'tracking shots.'" Such courses, like analogous literary courses, simply daze students' perception of whatever drew them to movies in the first place. Moving "from ethics and aesthetics to ecstatics," the teacher needs to avoid "even the semblance of celebrating already established works at the expense of those still despised, much less those preferred by an elite at the expense of those loved by the great majority. Only in this way will he be able to make clear the continuity of all song and story, pre-print, print and post-print, high, medium and low."

EVEN IF Nisbet ever raised his voice (which he doesn't), Fiedler would be by this time far out of his shouting range, charging through a mythic jungle still scarcely mapped. This entangling dream place has at least two chief domains, on one of which he reported in his famous 1948 essay, "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey." That was the myth of Huck and Jim, Ishmael and Queequeg, Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook, in which "the new Adam lives in innocent anti-marriage" with a noble savage of another color. The new Adam in this myth is "an anti-Odysseus, who finds his identity *by running away from home*." It is the Home-as-Hell myth, and a certain sexual innocence is secured when Twain turns the new Adam into Huck Finn, a boy who won't ever grow up. (Imagine an adult Huck! Twain couldn't. It's easy to imagine an adult Tom Sawyer. His name is Babbitt.)

The other American myth is called Home-as-Heaven, and the interplay of the two of them can be "read as a single work, composed over more than a century, in many media and by many hands." This is America's Inadvertent Epic, "unequaled in scope and resonance by any work of High Art." (Don't buy *that*; but read on.) The best sellers that compose it "have been loved by the majority audience, which considers them not epical at all (the very word turns them off) but 'good reads.'"

Such myths don't create ideas; like dreams, they release feelings, which the waking life may ideologize. Thus if, thanks to the myth of Home-as-Hell, "All Americans . . . including girls and women . . . at levels deeper than ideology perceive white women as the enemy" —Huck's Aunt Sally, she who must be escaped from because she'll "civilize" us—that not only explains why "even the most enlightened of us, male and female alike, end up cheering McMurphy's attempted rape of Big Nurse" in the movie version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, it can also explain "why, after all, ERA may never become part of the Constitution." ERA ideologized women as the Oppressed; but between waking and sleeping we question that categorization; is it not they who are the mythical oppressors?

But that myth is a detail in[illegible] book, which spends its time o[illegible] myth of Home-as-Heaven. [illegible] myth, unlike the other, has [illegible] the province chiefly of women[illegible] thors, extending from Louisa [illegible] Alcott and Harriet Beecher S[illegible] all the way to the scripters o[illegible] soaps (where, if no marriage [illegible] long, that is not because mar[illegible] is precarious but because it is [illegible] sole conceivable Happy Ending, [illegible] the soap opera can never end").

TV has its Home-as-Hell [illegible] too, the "men's" shows: the w[illegible] erns, the cop shows, the sci-fi s[illegible] taculars, in which "we head ou[illegible] the Territory once more" and [illegible] Starsky is paired with Gentile Hu[illegible] black Tenspeed with white Bro[illegible] shoe.

And so much do the two m[illegible] differ as day and night that day[illegible] is TV's soaptime, nighttime, copt[illegible] Let no commonsense bore pr[illegible] that programs are shown when t[illegible] intended viewers are most likel[illegible] be near the screen; no more [illegible] the mass dreams themselves is t[illegible] analyst bound to take cognizanc[illegible] trivial fact.

The "feminine pop tradition" [illegible] gins with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* [illegible] *Life Among the Lowly*, a book [illegible] puts on display "the most comp[illegible] dious gallery of homes in Amer[illegible] literature": the Cabin itself, the[illegible] Clares' villa, Miss Ophelia's [illegible] England farmhouse, Legree's [illegible] cayed mansion, more, more. [illegible] Stowe, who had published "a [illegible] of domestic guidebook called *Ho[illegible] and Home Papers*," in effect sketc[illegible] for her successors "the myth of [illegible] Utopian Household."

Reading her mythically is ju[illegible] fied by the way she wrote m[illegible] ically; her characters, Uncle T[illegible] Eliza, Topsy (who, as everyb[illegible] knows, just "growed"), Little [illegible] Simon Legree, "emerge mysteri[illegible] ly from the collective unconsci[illegible] and pass, scarcely mediated by [illegible] almost transparent text, into [illegible] public domain, to which, like[illegible] authentic popular literature, t[illegible] properly belong." That's a way[illegible] stating the fact that most of [illegible] people who can name them h[illegible] never read the novel.

What continually interests Fiedler is this strange capacity of certain literary cts to slip past the confines of text, a thing the apostles of pure t who are currently pipelined every academy give no heed to ll.

f the word "myth" puts you as it generally does me, then your attention to that strange nomenon: the way, for instance, rlock Holmes is known to mil- s who've neither read a page of ıan Doyle nor even seen one of perfunctory Holmes movies.

Mrs. Stowe never got closer to real South than Kentucky, and it in Brunswick, Maine, seated at ommunion service in February l, that she was visited by the ucination from which *Uncle n's Cabin* started: the vision of hite man beating an old black n to death. The book commenced al publication before she was l launched writing it, "sustained, ould appear, by other hallucina- ns as vivid as the first." Where y came from, why they've proved contagious, we needn't venture say. Their source, at any rate, s not the nightmare of slavery. at was only her vehicle for a per nightmare: the nightmare of me cosmically violated: Uncle n's home, all homes.

t was because the central myth not pertain to slavery that its tage could survive a transposi- n of Mrs. Stowe's story into anti- gro forms. This was effected in *e Clansman* of Thomas Dixon, o survived until 1946, though novel had been totally forgotten cept in D. W. Griffith's film ver- n, *The Birth of a Nation*. Dixon s faithful to one theme of Stowe's, centrality of the Home. Rape tomizes the ultimate threat to s, so when Dixon turned Recon- uction Negroes into rapists, in to- reversal of Mrs. Stowe's benign rkies, the continuity of America's advertent Epic was not breached all. In *The Birth of a Nation* ansmen ride to head off rape while diences cheer.

"I myself once saw" (Fiedler writes) "the members of a left-wing ciné club in Athens, believers all in the equality of the races and the unmitigated evil of the Klan, rise to their feet at ten o'clock in the morning . . . to scream with blood lust and approval equal to that of the racist first-nighters of 1915 as white womanhood was once more delivered from the threat of black rape." God knows, he adds, in the nightmare they plunged into open-eyed, "what ultimate enemies of their own were threatening what prized and virginal darlings."

And Dixon recognized Margaret Mitchell as his literary heir. In *Gone With the Wind* (1936), where the threatened home is Tara, we encounter once more the supreme indifference of myth to medium. For the blockbuster movie, with two directors and eleven or twelve script-writers, "proved to be as aesthetically undistinguished as her prose," and yet became the most popular spectacle of the age. Rape and vengeance is the formula still, and the continuity with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* still perceptible. (The rape in *Uncle Tom* was flagellation, and the vengeance that of God working on an evildoer's conscience.)

And on, into *Roots*; but rather than try to show how that fits in (a task that gives even Fiedler trouble), I'll ask again his own question: what was Literature?

It was, he would have us think, popular entertainment, subsequently transformed by the academy into an elitist bore. By attending to myth, he says, he is showing the academy how to get the excitement back: a *popular* excitement. But at what cost!—jettisoning what from age to age has always been preserved by a minority, some exact perception of the satisfactions of art.

Shakespeare, yes, was one popular playwright among many others. But his plays rise above theirs, such of theirs as have chanced to survive, by the local quality of his writing: the vigor of the page, the felt jostle of word against word, the absoluteness of phrasing ("a mole cinque-spotted"; "the beggar's nurse, and Caesar's"). True, Mrs. Stowe's "most mythically resonant tableaus are . . . usually the 'worst' written," shrill and sickly sweet; but from the fact that "the words she finds or does not find simply do not matter," it does not follow at all that words don't matter.

To perceive words, to sense rhythms, to distinguish phrase from phrase, these are aspects of a rare skill, of which it is no use pretending all students are capable. The greatest literary works—the *Iliad*, *Hamlet*—owe their distinction to what only that order of perception can discern: the union of a powerful myth with expression just as powerfully adequate. Such perception needs defending against the pedantries Leslie Fiedler rightly lambasts. It needs defending, too, against his pretense of having discovered "the continuity of all song and story," accessible in its most widely circulated avatars.

Why Shakespeare's admirers (and no other hack dramatist's) thought his plays worth collecting for publication in an expensive folio within seven years of his death is a question worth pondering. Messrs. Heming and Condell were prompted by a rare order of detailed perception that deserves our gratitude: a perception of how one way of saying differs from another, a kind of perception that lapses for Leslie Fiedler when he offers "The boy stood on the burning deck . . ." as denoting Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus."

That line, of which he quotes a parody to show the persistence of Longfellow among kids, is not by Longfellow or by any American but by Mrs. Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793–1835), also known (to elitists) as the author of "The stately homes of England/How beautiful they stand!"

No American boy stayed to the death on a burning deck. The myth is all wrong, and a myth critic should have known better. From Poe through Melville to *Catch-22*, the myth for Americans is self-preservation. Fidelity to the death is an *English* myth, in America attributed only to dogs named Fido. Robert Nisbet would be the man to write a meditation on that. ■

FICTION

Lyricist of the Lunch Pail

by Frances Taliaferro

Stanley Elkin's thousand-year epic of the working man.

George Mills, by Stanley Elkin. E.P. Dutton, 488 pages. $15.95.

HISTORY is a random process. The message delayed, the road not taken, the length of Cleopatra's nose, Nero's dyspepsia—these are Clio's accidents, as banal as they are unpredictable. The cast of characters changes very little over the millennia: there may have been no gentleman when Adam delved, but society was stratified shortly thereafter. Long before there were collars, there were white-collar bosses. There were also blue-collar workers, riding the service elevators of history up and down, going nowhere, making no capital of chance.

George Mills, Stanley Elkin's eponymous hero, is one of the latter. For a thousand years the Millses have been yeomen: "working stiff[s]," "dog soldiers of the domestic": bland, lumpish, blue-collar, lunch-pail men, doomed "never to rise, never to break free of their class, marked as Cain . . . forever to toil, wander, luckless as roustabout." After "a thousand years of stall and standstill," the George Mills who lives in the Midwest in the 1980s has come very little farther than the George Mills who went, all unwitting, on the First Crusade. The creature comforts are more reliable now, but the state of mind hasn't changed.

Our lives happen to us. We don't make them up. For every hero who means to cross an ocean on a raft, there are a hundred men fallen overboard, a thousand, who find themselves in the lifeboat by accident.

George Mills concentrates on the accidental life of the present George, who lives in St. Louis and makes a sort of living as a moving man for a slum entrepreneur, shifting the sorry possessions of the evicted. George was conceived in the basement of a Milwaukee apartment building where his father (another George Mills) was janitor and his mother was a maid; during the Depression, the elder George took his wife and child to Florida in search of work in the orange groves, but by accident he ended up as a factotum in an odd little town whose main industry was spiritualism. Our George spent his boyhood as an assistant to the "doctors" and "reverends" who operated séances and ectoplasm museums.

Now George is in his fifties, and his life continues to be something that just "happens" to him. He meets his wife at the Delgado [illegible] room and they happen into [illegible] riage; when the slum entrepr[illegible] lays him off, George happens i[illegible] job as male nurse and factotu[illegible] Judith Glazer, a wealthy w[illegible] dying of cancer. George is her [illegible] panion on her trip to Juáre[illegible] laetrile treatments, but Judith [illegible] in Mexico and George returns [illegible] blue-collar future in St. Louis.

The short and simple anna[illegible] the poor have often been the [illegible] ing point for Stanley Elkin's [illegible] raunchy imagination. *George* [illegible] is no exception, but Elkin st[illegible] the rather plotless framework o[illegible] novel by interpolating two [illegible] chapters that tell the stories of [illegible] historical George Millses: the [illegible] who accompanies his noble m[illegible] on the First Crusade and does s[illegible] time in a Polish salt mine; anc[illegible] forty-third, who (by chance) m[illegible] the acquaintance of King Georg[illegible] and is sent on a diplomatic mis[illegible] to Constantinople, where he [illegible] pens into becoming a janissary [illegible] lives in a state of arrested hc[illegible] ness in the harem of Yildiz Pal[illegible] These two sections are not histo[illegible] pastiche but contemporary El[illegible] whether George Mills I is talkin[illegible] his horse in the salt mine or Ge[illegible] Mills XLIII is being fed a ko[illegible] lunch by the British ambassa[illegible] to Constantinople. Both histo[illegible] chapters stand well enough on t[illegible] own to qualify as short stories, [illegible] as structural elements of the n[illegible] they seem as arbitrary and an[illegible] alous as flying buttresses tacked [illegible] to a split-level house.

THEORETICALLY, the rea[illegible] ought to care about Geo[illegible] Mills: it's seldom eno[illegible] that popular fiction turns [illegible] the working classes, and we ou[illegible] to enjoy the opportunity for sy[illegible] pathy with the proles. In fact, El[illegible] spends his best energy not on [illegible] central character but on his digr[illegible] sions; George Mills, bland but [illegible] servant, is a kind of Everyman-cu[illegible] Candide who visits whatever ve[illegible] tickles his author's fancy. As a [illegible] sult, this overgrown, unpruned n[illegible] el includes memorable, if erra[illegible]

Frances Taliaferro teaches at The Brearley School.

ons on spiritualism and astral
ection, King George IV's ob-
on with mother's milk, the pro-
l of the Ottoman court and of
American dance hall on Satur-
night, the mores of the Mex-
cancer clinic, and the dormi-
-brothel of a medieval Polish
mine.

lkin's black humor generates
e wicked portraits and throw-
y scenes that would sustain an-
r novelist for weeks—to wit,
bizarre levée of Judith Glazer,
woman dying of cancer. Yellow
alium, cracking jokes and ex-
ing her talent for "creative
ie," she booby-traps her respect-
deathbed visitors. One of them
sort of defrocked English pro-
or, usually stoned, who habit-
y greets George with "The hor-
the horror, hey Mills?"

lkin has a special fondness for
ks, outsiders, and cheerful
es; he is not without tender-
for the human condition, but
when he is being delicate he
ubbier, randier, more outré than
t—a poet of orifices, a bathroom
sode. Readers of other Elkin
els will not be surprised to find
one of the most brilliant pas-
s in *George Mills* describes how
world looks ("squeezed and bi-
l with a queer, buckled clarity")
n you've just had handfuls of
se dung shoved in your face.

eorge Mills is Stanley Elkin's
h work of fiction. It is billed as
"breakthrough novel"—which
be a reference to the amount of
e and territory it covers, though
less outrageous than *The Mak-
of Ashenden*, the amazing no-
a in which a man makes believ-
e love to a Kamchatkan brown
r, and less humane than *The
k Gibson Show*, whose hero
ds his picaresque way through
radio stations of America in
rch of his identity. No one should
ect a serious novelist—especial-
madly inventive one like Stan-
Elkin—to keep writing the same
k, but *George Mills* is so often
bling and tiresome that the read-
thinks wistfully of earlier, pre-
eakthrough" novels by this ec-
tric virtuoso. ■



A History of Women's Bodies, by Edward Shorter. Basic Books, 416 pages. $24.95.

EDWARD Shorter is professor of history at the University of Toronto and the author of *The Making of the Modern Family*. Reading his new book, I wondered if his publishers had been hoping for something that didn't quite materialize. They trumpet *A History of Women's Bodies* as a "landmark work" that demonstrates the "real source of women's oppression by men," a challenge to much of the accepted wisdom of modern feminist literature. But in fact this book is what the title says it is: a minutely researched description of what has happened to women and their bodies—not since the dawn of time, exactly, but at least since the Middle Ages.

The author's purpose is to demonstrate that until around 1900 women were tyrannized by their susceptibility to a particular set of health problems—gynecological ones—and by their role as childbearers, mothers, and housewives, and that it was largely this position that kept them inferior and unliberated. In support of this, Professor Shorter bombards us with statistics and graphic descriptions of woman's horrible lot. Much of this is grim. If you don't have a strong stomach, stay away from Shorter's accounts of medieval midwifery practices, as reported in contemporary sources.

As far as it goes, Shorter's thesis is undeniably true. He's right to point out that many feminists have idealized premodern midwifery with their claim that birth attendants usually let nature take its course and didn't intervene unnecessarily; just a few of the eyewitness accounts in this book disprove that generalization. (But then Shorter himself is sometimes inclined to take twentieth-century medicine's "advances" a little too much as gospel; the practice of shaving the pubic hair of women in labor, for example, which he cites approvingly on "hygienic" grounds, is being done away with in many hospitals today.) But his conclusion that women have traditionally been slaves to unwanted pregnancies and hordes of children is not news, nor is it adequate. The fact is that women's oppression—and liberation—is not simply a matter of biology, as, for example, the situation of women in the Soviet Union today clearly illustrates. The Soviet birth rate is extremely low and its abortion rate extremely high. Soviet health care, though not perfect, is certainly twentieth-century. Soviet women go out to work in high numbers. And yet it's a sociological cliché that the Soviet working wife also shops, does the laundry and housework, and cooks the dinner, while her husband, be he blue-collar worker or intellectual, watches TV. Some circumstances of women's oppression change much more slowly than women's health. Professor Shorter has produced a fascinating source book on women's health over the last five centuries, but he hasn't answered all the questions. **T. G.**

Steve Wilcox

Goodbye, Mickey Mouse, by Len Deighton. Knopf, 352 pages. $13.95.

THE NEW Len Deighton novel, his fifteenth, seems to promise the same serviceable formula he's tinkered with in his other World War II books, most notably *Bomber* and *SS-GB*. Set in wartime Britain, it is the story of a motley group of American fighter pilots based in the muddy fenland of East Anglia. When not hurling their battered Mustangs through aerial combat over Germany, they find themselves embroiled in more mundane hostilities with the locals outside the pub at Steeple Thaxted on a Saturday night. As their numbers slowly dwindle, the men quarrel and bitch about creeping damp, botched leadership, and war.

Aficionados of Deighton's work might reasonably expect to be offered here: the lives and loves of men at war, revelations of cowardice or treachery, quaint British stuff, brave boys proving their mettle, the West Point martinet hated-by-his-men, death in battle, dense clumps of useful information—and, above all, a sturdy plot guided with such a swift and skillful hand that readers will gratefully overlook clunky characterization or wooden dialogue en route to the denouement.

Many of these delights are delivered. But the sad truth is that Deighton has unwisely opted for character this time, leaving the plot to lumber along without any coherent narrative thread. The denouement is too late and perfunctory to be convincing. In the meantime, the dawdling reader has had the opportunity to notice, for example, the stilted dialogue ("But in wartime the Army has a million lovers; it becomes a whore. I don't want to see you betrayed, Alex"); the two-dimensional characters; the awkwardness of the sex scenes ("He pulled the blanket down and admired her bare body"); and Deighton's grotesque idea of women ("Essentially feminine, she was able to chatter but say nothing, ask questions and require no reply"). Devoid of emotional authenticity, the book is oddly anemic—except on the subject of fighter planes. Deighton's obsession with planes makes the combat sequences lurid and exciting. If only the rest of the book were too. **H. R.**

Novel on Yellow Paper (288 pages, $3.50), **Over The Frontier** (288 pages, $3.50), **The Holiday** (192 pages, $2.75), by Stevie Smith. Pinnacle Books.

UNTIL recently, Stevie Smith was best remembered as a girlish voice on the BBC reciting poems that lapsed now and again into baby babble, but that were written, as Robert Lowell said, in a "unique and cheerfully gruesome voice." The recent film version of the play *Stevie*, however, has broadened the popularity of this most peculiar writer and person. Now, nearly a half century after she wrote them, her three novels are having their American debut.

When her first published work, *Novel on Yellow Paper, or Work it out for Yourself*, appeared in 1936, Smith found herself catapulted to a modest literary fame. One notable writer, in fact, mistook the eponymous Stevie Smith for Virginia Woolf, and it's easy to see why. Plotless, quixotic, solipsistic, infected with a kind of febrile gaiety, the book at first glance resembles one of those eccentric artifacts of Woolf, Firbank, or Stein. Smith was not quite so careful, though, merely slapdash and fey; but she can become an acquired taste. Sylvia Plath, of the same morbid sorority as Stevie, called herself "a desperate Smith-addict."

This first book introduced readers to Pompey Casmilus, "*farouche* and furious," who was, with scant disguise, Stevie Smith herself—by turns winning and exasperating, intellectual and infantile, deathstruck, peevish, and witty. Pompey pontificates on whatever occurs to her, very much in the voice of the Thirties. She jabbers on about Jews, sex, the church, writing ("brace up, chaps, there's a 60,000 word limit"), ruminates on friends, love, marriage, and omnipresent d "Always the buoyant, ethereal noble thought is in my mind: is my Servant."

In 1938 Pompey Casmilus back, in *Over The Frontier*, ex ing her harangue into the sh of war with Germany. Her excesses of meandering prose whatever tale there is—even a dict may balk. Ultimately turned against Pompey as alte *Novel on Yellow Paper* was "brassy," she said, though "i a sort of lightheartedness scraped it through," but ever thought that *Over The Frontie* "something to be ashamed of."

During the war she wrote he novel, *The Holiday*, her own f ite. Readers didn't agree; it 1949 before it found a publi Here a young woman spends a night's leave with her clerical in the north, accompanied by a loved cousin and an office league. The four bicker and s over the difficult political and gious questions of the day, holiday always infused with a ancholy sense of the cost of life impossibility of love.

The dead man who speak Smith's famous chestnut was waving but drowning." In *The H day* Stevie Smith is most cle most poignantly, a person "in in this world [who] must long home."

Sez Who? Sez Me, by Mike Ro E. P. Dutton, 280 pages, $13.

IF HE isn't the dean, Mike R ko is certainly one of the n distinguished faculty mem in the school of beer-and-a journalism. These are the men— they are all *men*—who regale regularly in their columns of tosterone prose with tales of fauna in neighborhood bars, croo pols, the brutality of life in underclass, the phoniness of ce rities, and the unsung valor of common "bub." They delight tugging at their readers' inna while recounting horrific stories plain folks maimed or killed w

about their business and then
cted or abused by powerful
ucratic stooges. Most major
s have at least one such col-
st, and they are recognizable
eir diminutive first names—
Jimmy, Spike. At their worst
are boorish, nativistic, and
rless; at their best, colorful
icaresque.

yko, a Pulitzer Prize-winner
now writes for the *Chicago*
imes and is the author of the
-machine exposé *Boss*, is one
best. As this collection of his
ns demonstrates, Royko can
ferret out a comic scene with-
mothering it in the machismo
ny of his colleagues wear like
s. Though occasionally given
patiating on his talent for ine-
on, Royko is possessed of a
nt sense of character. When
tains his balance, as he does
eces about his beloved Billy
s Tavern, the city's tougher
borhoods, or his huge stable
quaintances, criminal and oth-
, led by the mythical and fa-
Slats Grobnik, his Chicago
a resemblance to that of Bel-
Augie March. These columns,
with a fistful about sports
nalities ("Jocks and Jerks")
ome endearing pieces of inci-
l invective (it is difficult to
e anyone who calls Phyllis
fly "a national nag"), are the
in this collection.

other areas, Royko falters. His
s on trends in "lifestyles" are
e compared with Russell Bak-
aubles of mock ingenuousness.
when he expounds on the rela-
between men and women, he
devil's advocate for sexism
a bit too much conviction. But
o's greatest difficulty lies not
nself but in his medium. Daily
alism, particularly daily col-
writing, is perishable stuff, and
anthologized, columns lack
itality that seems to suffuse
when read over the morning's
and stale doughnuts. Mike
o is considered a powerful
in Chicago because of his
ledge of local and state politics;
e isn't quite powerful enough to
this book together. **D.S.B.**

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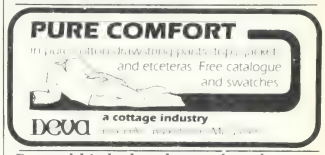
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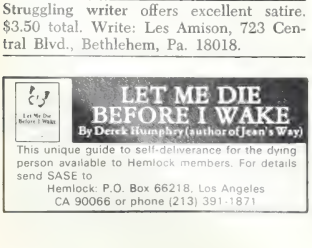
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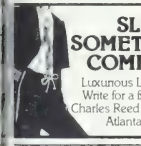
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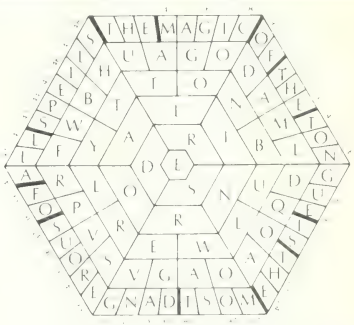

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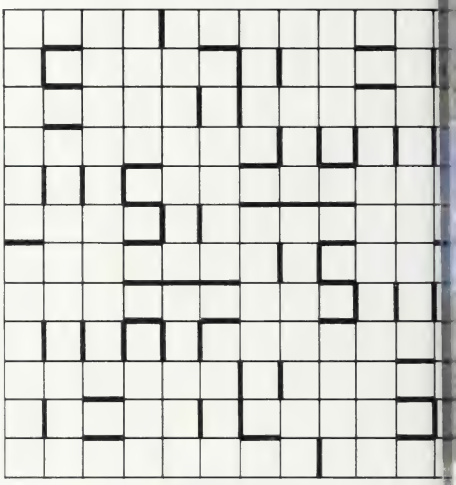
Solution to the October Puzzle Notes for "Hex"

"The magic of the tongue is the most dangerous of all spells" (Edward Bulwer Lytton).

1. turtle, hidden in reverse; 2. Luther, anagram; 3. (p)relate; 4. arm(l)e(anagram)-t(rack); 5. gal-ore; 6. logger, two meanings; 7. o-ri(o)le; 8. cooler, two meanings; 9. diner-O; 10. f(R)iend; 11. re(T.A.)in; 12. her-ni(reversal)-a; 13. b.-I-reme(mber); 14. timbre, homonym; 15. b(R)oiler; 16. Ber(LI)n; 17. nud(g)es; 18. UN-used (anagram); 19. queens, two meanings; 20. S-equin(e); 21. less-on; 22. sto(l)len; 23. Hansel, hidden; 24. an-eles(anagram); 25. M-owers; 26. wo(o)ers, anagram; 27. wrasse, anagram; 28. wa(ter.)s; 29. edgers, pun; 30. Grease, anagram; 31. Sever-N; 32. ver(G.)es, anagram; 33. Red (Sh)oes; 34. orde(anagram)-r(oad)s; 35. overdo, homonym; 36. devo(U)r, reversal; 37. S-lop-ed.; 38. poodle, anagram; 39. folder(ol); 40. La-re-do; 41. F(lay)ed; 42. dea(d)-fly; 43. swayed, homonym; 44. yaw(p)ed; 45. deb-ate; 46. Tab-led; 47. Hal-Ted; 48. deaths, anagram.

Abecedarian Jigsaw

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.



This month's instructions:

A slight variation this time: the clues are listed in the alphabetical order of the last letter of their answers, not the first. At least one answer ends with each letter of the alphabet. Thus the answer to the first clue ends with *A*, and the last clue, with *Z*. The solver must determine where the answers fit in the diagram.

Clue answers include four proper nouns; answers of varying uncommonness are at 1, 14, 15, 22, and 23. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 79.

CLUES

1. Jul./Aug. stew: birds' necks (6)
2. Rent Avis for travel clearance (4)
3. Society staff (4)
4. Doctor's funny when company leaves (5)
5. Mad dash for fish (4)
6. Made a connection between retrogressive study and periods of sleep (7)
7. There's no iron in the fence from that place (6)
8. What a mermaid may be said to give fellow—a drink (7)
9. A big wheel makes a spectacle of himself around outskirts of city (9)
10. Church service allowing that large piece of crust (6)
11. Church confirmation in German is stifling (7)
12. Uprooted birches (about 1,000) from soil (8)
13. Make a selection at the florist, say, with relish (10)
14. Ragout made of limas (5)
15. A trip for the devout held by Jerusalem's leader (4)
16. Journey back through Quakertown (4)
17. One right in corrupt capital: thieving (9)
18. Part of church, in casual Latin (7)
19. Crowd the Spanish inn (6)
20. Science Bowl diploma (6)
21. A block style of furniture (4)
22. Perfume maker encouraged the beginning of a plant (9
23. Very small animal—not one ounce when lifted (4)
24. The monster's back on that ground (4)
25. White domestic pup (5)
26. One half-Welch country (4)
27. Roman at sea put in one decking (10)
28. Latin gentleman tees off very loud person (5)
29. They swear at samplers (9)
30. Makes accommodations for commercial apartments (6
31. Hound bachelor's group (6)
32. U.N. turbo malfunctions: the rocket's last glare (7)
33. Tutor cast again for fish (5)
34. Turkish dish has edge turned with gold (5)
35. In the midst of drink, I evoked Russian city (4)
36. A man's sent back inside to conform—that's a big lat (3-3)
37. Coca-Cola's said to be flatter for a purpose (4)
38. A prize shrink (7)
39. With Spring, fix bell carelessly before end of May (8)
40. Tito's brother, the ultimate character (4)

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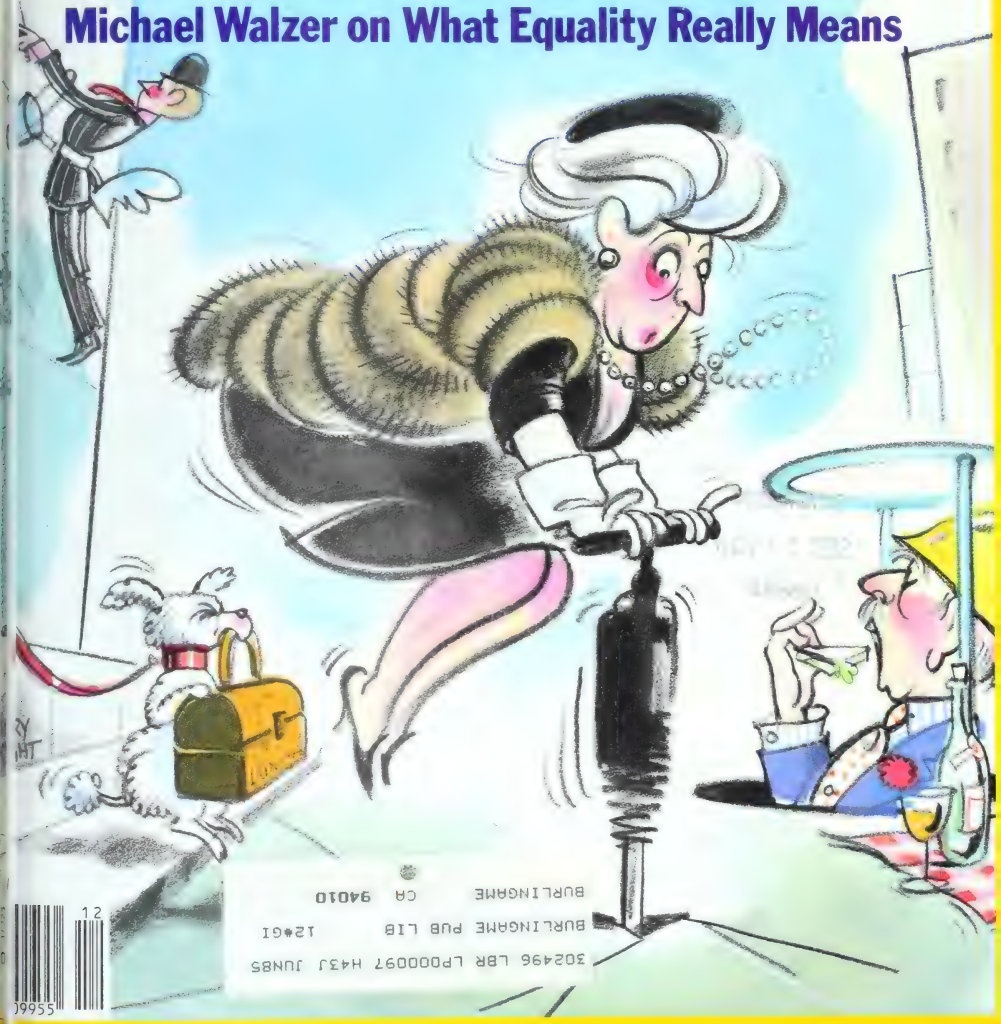
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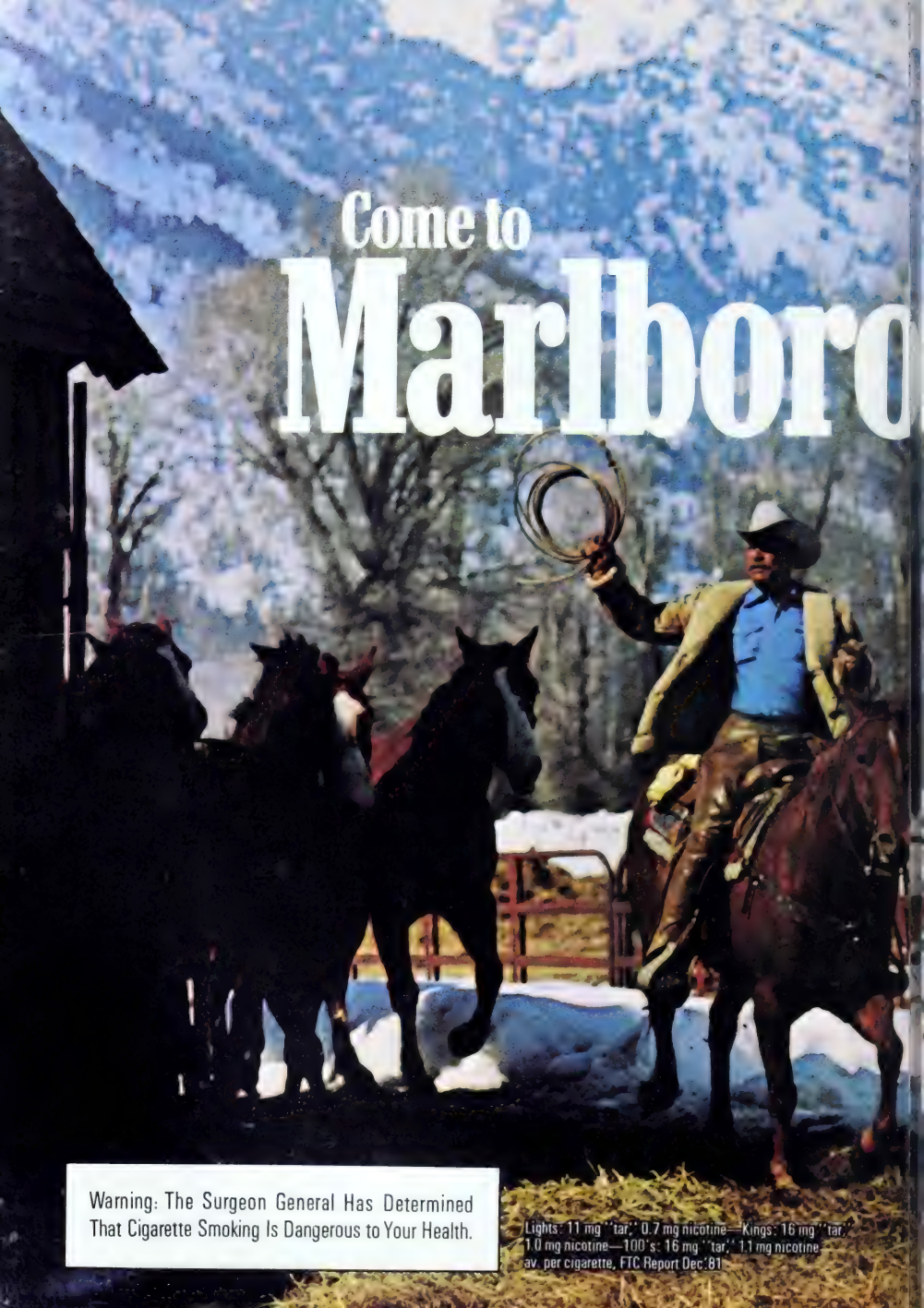
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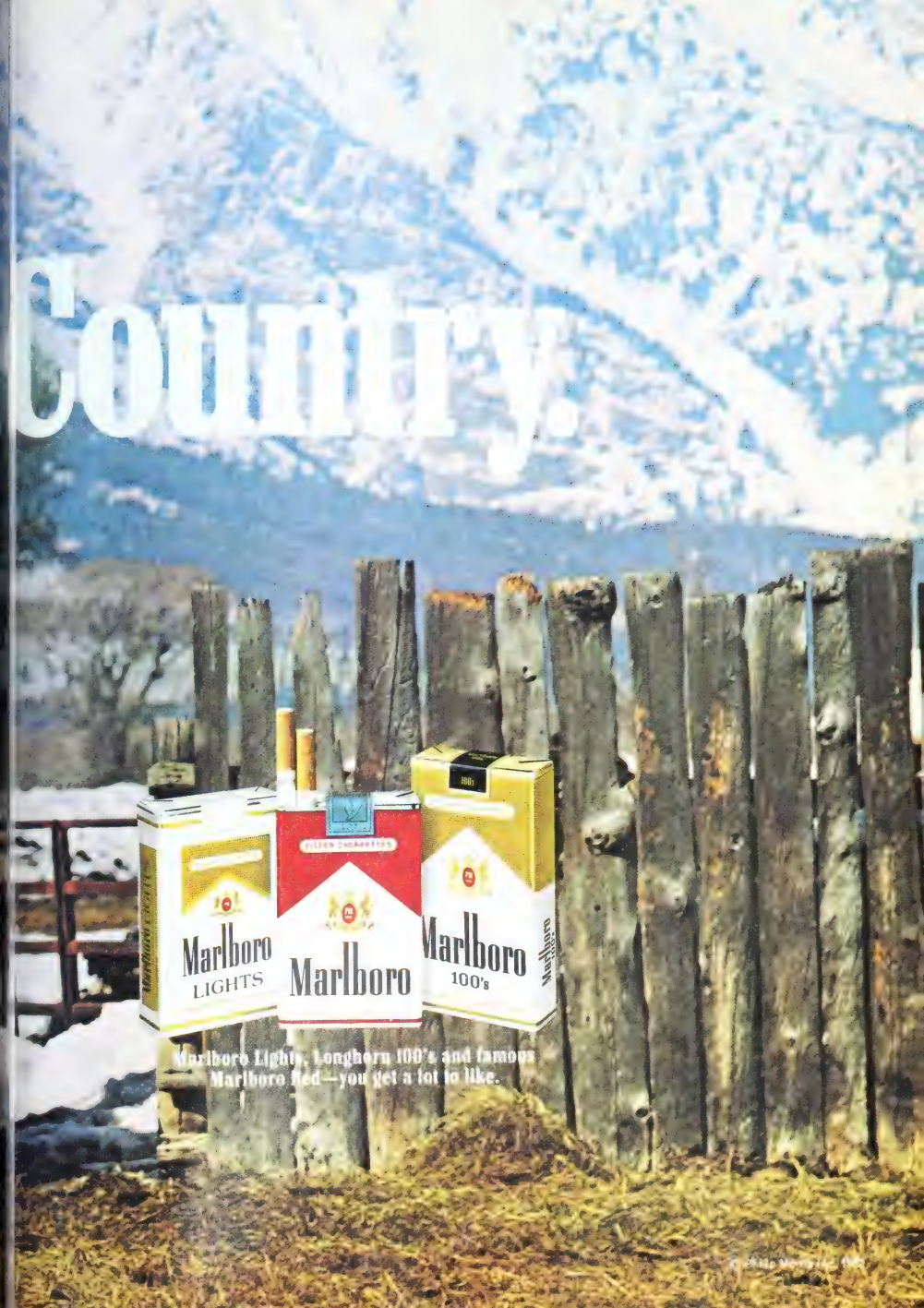
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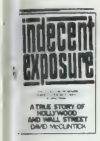
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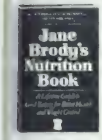
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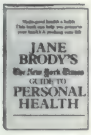
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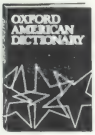
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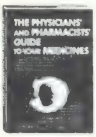
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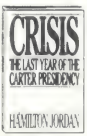
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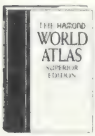
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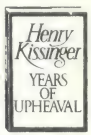
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are very welcome, especially if they are short and typed double-spaced. We enjoy hearing from readers, even though volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

LETTERS



Biting the hand

Stephen Chapman didn't make clear his specific problem with government farm programs in his article ["The Farmer on the Dole," *Harper's,* October]. Was it that massive government programs have, by his figures, brought the average farm dweller's income up to 97 percent of the average nonfarmer's income? Or did Mr. Chapman simply object to farmers complaining when he thinks they're on easy street? It should be noted that farmers grow crops for a living, even if some complain; whereas Mr. Chapman seems to complain for a living. Perhaps he has a small vegetable garden at home.

There's another side to the story of the farm situation that deals with the first decline in farmland prices since the Depression, record post-Depression numbers of farm bankruptcies, foreclosures, and farm cooperative failures; increasing costs of production; difficulties with farm commodity transportation; and government interference with world markets for political motives. Sure, some of these problems are affected by the programs Mr. Chapman gripes about. But the programs only came into existence because there were serious problems in the farm economy prior to government assistance.

Not content with presenting a one-sided view of farm programs, Mr. Chapman also attacks farmers, suggesting they cheat on their taxes. But let's face it, the farmer whose acreage and production is monitored by the U.S. government is far less likely to feel free to underreport his income than, say, a writer who sells material regularly on a freelance basis. That would seem even more logical in the case of a writer who objects so strongly to the programs his tax dollars support.

JAMES S. HAND
Grand Forks, N.D.

Chapman plays fast and loose with his statistics on farm income. According to USDA statistics, in 1978 79 percent of U.S. farms had *sales* of less than $40,000. However figures are juggled for reporting purposes, it is difficult to see how these farmers can obtain net incomes of nearly $24,000 (Chapman's figure) from their farm production after paying for all their (increasingly expensive) inputs.

The term "family farm" is also deceptive when applied across the board to U.S. agriculture: only 3.3 percent of all U.S. farms (with sales of $200,000 or more) accounted for 44.2 percent of gross agricultural sales, and about 10 percent of all U.S. farms (200,000 farms) accounted for approximately two thirds of agricultural production. These large units are dependent on hired labor and therefore must be classified as "larger-than-family" farms. In contrast, 65.9 percent of all U.S. farms (with sales of under $20,000) contributed only 8.6 percent of gross sales. For these smaller farms, off-farm income sustains the farm enterprises. For example, those farms with annual sales of less than $2,500, which comprise 34.1 percent of farms, still averaged over $17,000 per family in *non*-farm income.

It is the large units that most benefit from current farm policies, while many of these policies work against long-term sustained yield practices, and mire the small and medium-sized family farmer ever more deeply in debt.

JANE ADAMS
Carbondale, Ill.

I am part of a family dairy farm and I think your article on agriculture welfare is so very true. The greed and ignorance of the farming community and its purchased politicians are disgusting. Farmers and their organizations are the first to criticize welfare, taxes, and a government with no restraints. Yet farmers are the most successful special interest group in this country. My brother and I are proud that we do not farm or dairy for the government welfare market.

I went to a local Farm Bureau meeting last night. It was attended by at least forty farmers and dairymen. I proposed a resolution limiting government purchases of dairy products. I could not get a second on the motion. I asked the group if anyone could give me a reason why the government should be obligated to buy all excess agriculture products. No other business gets such special treatment. No one would reply. I have spoken up for government agriculture welfare limitations to other agriculture organizations. Silence is the only reply.

HARRY FAWCETT
Los Banos, Calif.

Stephen Chapman is precisely on target. The bottom line is simple: today our farmers produce 50 percent more food and fiber than the U.S. can consume. Farm programs remove any possible incentive for self-discipline, so a vigorous export market is our sole mechanism for working off this enormous excess. But Russia, China, the Middle East and various developing countries are customers only when they run short and can afford our grain.

I do, however, regret that Mr. Chapman's timely and brave essay was marred by a piece of easy emotionalism. As he well knows, slum children in Harlem do not go without milk so that dairy farmers may prosper. He ignores the existence of food stamps and school lunch programs, and the plain fact that milk money in Harlem, as elsewhere, is diverted to a host of less nutritious alternatives. It is hardly proper to ask the Wisconsin dairyman to bear this burden of guilt. His enthusiastic and endless contribution to the cheese surplus is quite enough guilt to lug around.

CLANCY STROCK
St. Louis, Mo.

STEPHEN CHAPMAN REPLIES:

To respond to Ms. Adams's charge that I misused statistics, I refer her to the USDA's *Economic Indicators of the Farm Sector*, 1980, p. 106, which reports the average income of all farm families to be $23,822. Figures in the same publication indicate that 73 percent of all farms have annual sales of less than $40,000. Though these families make relatively little money from farming, most of them have considerable outside income (hardly a good reason for subsidizing them). The high incomes of larger farms also raise the average considerably.

Ms. Adams goes on to make the same point I made: even if we need a huge subsidy program to help small family farmers (which I think we don't), the current system mostly helps the large, wealthy ones.

Coming out

After reading Taylor Branch's cover story on Dan Bradley ["Closets of Power," *Harper's*, October], I felt that Branch had some understanding of Dan Bradley's deeper, more personal needs—beyond the need to conform and "perform" that drove him into what is really our national "closet." However, through most of the article, I felt that Branch was swallowing his own prejudices, inhibitions, and lack of information with great doses of castor oil chased with rather lead-footed attempts at "compassion." It is still beyond me why he must go through paragraphs on the clinical theories of homosexual etiology instead of learning more about the real attitudes of and toward homosexuals. Very few homosexuals fool themselves into thinking that in coming through our extremely sexist society they can live unscarred, without any self-hatred. Dan Bradley, gripped in a Georgia Baptist orphanage/seminary vise, was lucky, frankly, to come out alive. Others have had their self-hatred boiled into them like extra bleach into sheets, until the bleach finally eats away all the cotton—self-hatred leading to drugs, alcohol, or mental imbalance. In asking why gays have embraced the "worst" offenses of capitalist hedonistic values (discos, night clubs, hotels, etc.), Branch is only distancing himself from the situation, the way that whites once asked why there were so many Cadillacs to be seen in Harlem.

My fondest hope is that this article will give some encouragement to other gay men and women closeted all over the U.S., and put the fear of death into the so-called New Right. As a Southerner who has returned to the South after fifteen years in New York, I can only say that the New Morality is still the old machinery of fear, ignorance, and repression that I grew up with all along. I was only too happy to leave it behind at a very early age. Unfortunately Dan Bradley didn't have that luck.

PERRY BRASS
New Orleans, La.

Perhaps we should be grateful that a prestigious periodical has not only condescended to acknowledge our existence, but granted us the right to it. It is difficult to be grateful, however, when the acknowledgement is made via Taylor Branch's "Closets of Power."

"Homosexuals fear heterosexuals," writes Mr. Branch, "because they have always performed the lobotomies and made the rules—and also because they carry all the advantages of cultural transmission, such as children, a clear meaning for the word 'generation,' and membership in the most resilient and universal institution in human history (however battered the family has become)." That homosexuals do not have families is a conclusion not only false but patently, absurdly so. While it is true that for many of us the family, as history for Joyce, is a nightmare from which we are trying to awake, it is nonetheless true that many of us are parents, and all of us are someone's children. We do have families; furthermore, not all heterosexuals are parents, and not all parents are heterosexuals.

These absurdities would be trivial if they did not reveal the underlying principles of Branch's approach to Bradley in particular and homosexuals in general. He seems to regard us as beings inalienably other, trapped on the far side of an unbridgeable ontological gulf. We can be studied, like an exotic tribe, but we cannot be understood; we can be analyzed, but we cannot be comprehended. Although it may come as a surprise to Mr. Branch, homosexuals do,

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If we ever compile a book on *The Old Ways That Were Better Ways,* we will certainly include a chapter on the lambswool duster. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, crystal, china, pictures and other fragile items. When soiled, just wash it in warm soapy water. A 20″ authentic lambswool d **$8.00** ($1.95) #A163.

Heat Where You Need It

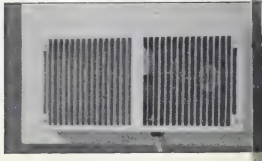


Here is a heater with the sophistication to automatically start warming your bedroom or bathroom before you get up! The secret is the *built-in timer — it lets you program this portable heater to go on and off in 15 minute intervals day or night.* It's filled with a special diathermic oil that never needs replacing. It has three heat settings (600w, 900w and 1,500w) and provides a maximum of 5,100 BTUs. A built-in thermostat responds to room temperature, but this DeLonghi heater never gets dangerously hot, making it perfect for a child's bedroom or playroom. This unit has easy-roll wheels for portability and all-steel construction in a neutral oyster color. It's 18″ x 8″ x 25″, weighs 38 lbs. and is UL listed. *This model with au timer is not generally available in stores* and costs **$150.00** (#A485.

Improve Your Circulation



Good air circulation thro your home means inc comfort, heating efficiency a form temperature. But every has its problems, whether it ceilings, unusually large roo later additions. Here are two lent ways to help *direct* the *balance* the temperature. The **to-room temperature balanc** (shown at left) mounts high frame of a doorway (doors c be closed) where it recir warm air down into the roo ConServ fan has a 110 volt motor with a 10 foot cord and an switch. It weighs just 2 lb. 3 oz. and measures 5½″ x 5″ x 3½″ ($3.95) #A397. The **register fan** (shown below) fits right register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out in room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatic the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which mea can use it in the summer to move the cool air up into the room booster fan (actually it is two small 4″ fans running together) registers up to6″x14″and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9′ of cord and costs **$40.00** ($3.95) #A536. We also offer the room-to-room fan and the register fan as a set for **$60.00** ($6.95) #A667.

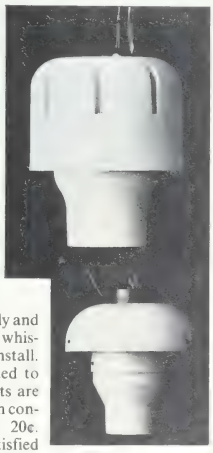


Dig In!



You don't need to be an infantryman digging foxholes under fire to appreciate the usefulness of a rugged highly portable folding shovel. It goes on camping trips, for digging firepits and trenching tents against rain. It goes to the garden, filling that inconvenient void between undersized hand trowels and full-sized shovels. In the winter it goes into the car, for coping with snow and ice. In short, it gets more use than any other shovel around the house. It is light and easy to use and stores handily. The shovel is all-steel, weighs only 2 lbs., and is built to last for years. The blade locks in each of 3 positions: folded, for storage or travel; at 90°, for scraping or hoeing; fully extended, for normal digging. The blade is 8½" x 6" and the 18" handle has a molded plastic handgrip. **$15.00** ($2.95) #A630.

ratification Devices



air stratifies, sitting in layers ording to temperature, cold ottom, warm at the top. An e home may show a 10° or perature difference between nd ceiling, meaning the air ve just spent money heating lly collecting up on the ceilng you no good. The Strato- new type of ceiling fan that tifies the air with less fuss aftiness — and at lower cost n the typical overhead fan. ounterclockwise rotation of creates a low-velocity airiat sets up a natural convecrrent to circulate room air gently and uously. The Strato-Jet fans are whisiet, unobtrusive and a snap to install. ousing and cord can be painted to with any decor. Operating costs are ble — the smaller model will run consly for a week for less than 20¢. ding to testimonials from satisfied ners, the fan saves up to 15% on heating costs and is especially in conjunction with alternative energy sources (wood stoves, heaters, solar heating systems) where temperature differentials ach 30° and more. The Strato-Jet comes in 2 sizes. The smaller (top) is for an average room (up to 200 sq. ft.) with 8′ ceilings. nit is 6" diameter by 7½" deep, comes with a 10′ cord and costs) ($3.95) #A660. The larger model serves rooms up to 400 sq. ceilings up to 16′. It measures 10" diameter by 12" deep, has a rd and costs **$75.00** ($4.95) #A661. Both Strato-Jets are UL and carry a 1-year warranty.

Slip-On Spikes



Ice and feet make a treacherous combination. With ice underfoot walking is no longer a mere habit but a reckless challenge to the law of gravity. Fear of falling whispers to us about the danger of our feet flying out from under us in a sudden, total and undignified loss of control. But there is a way to get a grip on the situation. These rubber harnesses slip right over shoes or boots and put four tungsten-carbide-tipped spikes between you and the ice. The new traction and control is effective psychologically as well as physically. The spikes are portable enough to fit easily in a coat pocket or bag and slip on in seconds. Order size small #A633 for shoe sizes up to 8, medium #A634 for 8½-11 and large #A635 for 11½ and over. If you plan to wear the spikes over heavy boots, order the next larger size. The slip-on spikes cost **$16.00** ($2.95) a pair.

Vinegar Mother



Most commercial vinegars are short-cut affairs (note how wine-flavored vinegars are replacing true wine vinegars). The natural process of aging vinegar in casks is too time-consuming, expensive and troublesome for commercial producers. In fact, less than 1% of the vinegar sold in the U.S. is produced over time by natural enzyme action with no additives, no blending, no preservatives. Since 1975 a California man has developed and sold a home-size, half-gallon cask stocked with mother vinegar. (The "mother" enzyme, which converts the alcohol in wine to acetic acid, is to vinegar-making what "starter" is to sourdough bread.) The barrels come with a supply of wine vinegar that has aged three months. As you use the vinegar, you simply replenish the barrel with left-over wine. From there on you have a perpetual supply of homemade wine vinegar right at your fingertips. The Franjoh Working Vinegar Barrel, as this product is officially known, is a handmade oak barrel with brass hoops, 6" in diameter by 8¼" long. It comes with a wooden stand, a funnel and tube for adding wine, a 10 oz. glass carafe for drawing off vinegar, and a recipe book. We can supply the white wine vinegar barrel #A648, red wine vinegar barrel #A647 or the sherry wine vinegar barrel #A649 for **$65.00** ($4.95) each. The set of three vinegar barrels, as shown here, includes a personalized brass plate inscribed with your last name and costs **$180.00** ($9.95) #A650.

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in fact, participate in and contribute to the community at large. We are different, but we are not a different species.

While we may be invisible and alien to you, we were born into a straight world and spend most of our lives living and working within it. Of necessity (and as Branch's article has unhappily and unintentionally shown), we know you considerably better than you know us.

DON HOFFMAN
Chicago, Ill.

Taylor Branch's masterful article should help to achieve what battalions of lawyers until now have not—the legalization of homosexual activity between consenting adults. Although there are persuasive constitutional arguments against anti-gay laws, these will be less important in the long run than widespread recognition that persecution of homosexuals is cruel, costly, and useless. The saga of Dan Bradley will contribute to broader awareness that punitive laws against consensual sex have no place in a civilized and humane society.

NORMAN DORSEN
President, American Civil Liberties Union
New York, N.Y.

This minor correction to Taylor Branch's sensitive account of homosexuality in Washington is written to absolve John Oakes and Max Frankel, the two editors of *The New York Times* editorial page with whom I worked, of any taint of insensitivity to gay rights. Never during my time on that paper's editorial board was any editorial of mine on gay rights spiked. On the contrary, Mr. Oakes gave his full support to my development of an editorial policy supportive of gay rights. After leaving the editorial board, I did have two columns on gay issues spiked in the news department, which functions under the direction of Executive Editor A. M. Rosenthal.

ROGER WILKINS
Washington, D.C.

Interferon postscript

Regarding the availability of interferon preparations for clinical trials ["Waiting for Interferon," by Charles Fox, *Harper's*, September], there are several reliable sources of FDA-approved materials. If entering a trial sponsored by the National Institute for Health (which makes interferon available at no cost) is either not possible or not desirable (because of the double-blind requirement), one can now arrange to be a one-man experiment. The patient or his physician can buy the interferon required and, provided the physician is affiliated with a research hospital, he can apply for a "compassionate IND" [Investigational New Drug Number] from the FDA.

MATHILDE KRIM
Head, Interferon Laboratory
Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research
New York, N.Y.

Zirconium is forever

In reference to the excellent article by Edward C. Banfield ["Art Versus Collectibles," *Harper's*, August], I would like to point out that although I am not an art connoisseur, and am therefore unqualified to agree or disagree with Mr. Banfield, I very much understand his point.

As president of a successful diamond company in the Manhattan diamond district, I cannot understand the insatiable lust people exhibit toward diamonds. Cubic zirconium has more luster, a higher refractive index, and greater density than diamonds. It takes a very trained eye to differentiate cubic zirconium from diamond. While investment grade diamonds might carry a price tag of $14,000 per carat, cubic zirconium costs between $3 and $5 a carat.

Yet people still buy diamonds, and lucky for me!

ISRAEL SEGAL
Lakewood, N.J.

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Two months ago we subscribed to *Harper's* and, frankly, we are surprised and disgusted over its present makeup. You will kindly cancel our subscription immediately, as we do not wish periodicals of this type arriving at our home.

JAMES E. WILSON
Placerville, Calif.



Report from the Letters Lady

No mistaking the subjects in the October issue that had you all reaching for pen and paper. As the letters pages this month show, Stephen Chapman's piece on farm subsidies and their cost, "The Farmer on the Dole," aroused strong emotions among farmers and consumers alike. There were many pointed allusions to the rubric "Hogwash." I was particularly impressed by the figures and statistics that farmers seem to have at their fingertips. Did you know that the farmer's share of the consumer food dollar is the lowest since records began in 1947? Or that the U.S. government today owns over 13 billion pounds of milk? I have to admit that the most definite conclusion I could draw from all the arguments and counterarguments was that farmers and their situations vary to an extraordinary degree. Several readers—including an "American Agri-Woman"—incidentally remarked that this magazine would not be around today without subsidies from two large foundations.

The impassioned letters on Taylor Branch's article about Dan Bradley, "Closets of Power," testify to his subject's impact. Both M. R. Gordon, of the University of California at Santa Barbara, and J. E. Phillips, of the University of Kentucky, pointed out that Mr. Branch's summary of Plato's views on the origin of human sexuality is not quite correct. Phillips: "There were three sexes —all-male, all-female, and a male-female combination. Zeus ordered these original humans divided down the middle as a punishment for arrogance, but when the new half-humans began to die of longing for their former other halves, he relented to the extent of moving their genitalia around to the cut side to allow temporary coupling." Gordon: "Here, Plato does not speak, as Mr. Branch claims, of a psyche 'originally both male and female' with 'fluidity at its core.' Rather, he speaks of the longing of each human for his or her lost half."

Well, you learn something new every day on this job. ■

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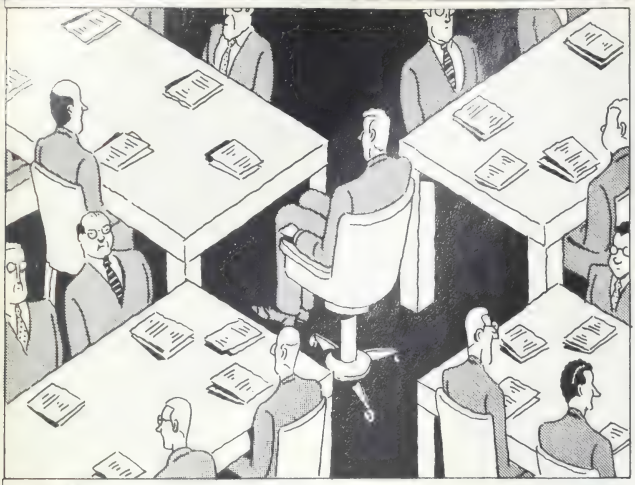


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THE BOARD GAME

by Timothy F. Bannon

Why celebrity has-beens love serving as corporate directors, and why management loves having them.

At a Republican fund-raising dinner in Texas last summer (as reported in *Texas Monthly*), someone asked former president Gerald Ford why the board of Amax corporation last year rejected a merger offer from Standard Oil of California that would have paid Amax stockholders $78.50 each for shares then trading at $38. Ford, who sits on the boards of Amax and eight other corporations with total assets of more than $44 billion, answered that an overnight 106 percent profit was "not in the best interests of the shareholders." Those shareholders paid Ford $16,000 last year in director's fees plus another $100,000 as a "consultant" to their corporation, which is in the mining business. In October, Amax was trading at about $20. Thanks, Jerry.

Timothy F. Bannon is a writer and attorney in Connecticut.

Though boards of directors loom large in both corporate theology and anticorporate demonology, they loom small in actual business life. Yet the need to maintain the fiction that boards are important creates an inflated boardroom culture totally at odds with reality, and provides a lucrative opportunity for people like Ford, with just the right combination of prestige and lack of expertise. Ford made more than $400,000 last year from corporations like Amax, American Express, and Twentieth Century-Fox. A former president is obviously an exceptional case, but between 1973 and 1981, the share of corporate board seats held by former public officials nearly doubled, from 1½ to 27 percent.

Consider Donald McHenry, an obscure career diplomat until Andrew Young's indiscretions led to his appointment as United Nations ambassador. McHenry served in that post for sixteen months, until January 1981. Since then he has joined the boards of four companies, including Coca-Cola, and become a governor of the American Stock Exchange. For directing duties alone, McHenry picked up $62,000 in 1981. Former commerce secretary Juanita Kreps (who, to be fair, was a master boardswoman even before her public service) made $162,000 for sitting on the boards of AT&T, Citicorp, Eastman Kodak, and four other New York Stock Exchange companies.

Corporate boards typically range in size from about ten directors up to twenty or twenty-four. A third to a half are usually "inside" directors—actual executives of the corporation. The rest are "outside" directors, usually other people from the business world but, increasingly, distinguished types with no particular business expertise. In theory—a theory still honored in law and in corporate ceremony—the board is elected by the stockholders and runs the corporation on their behalf, appointing the management and supervising its performance. In practice, management runs the company and appoints the board of directors.

The importance of the outside directors in corporate theology has increased as the corporate world has slowly acknowledged the truth first enunciated in 1932 by Adolph A. Berle and Gardiner Means in their classic study *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*: shareholders have no practical control over the corporation they own. Outside directors are supposed to supply the crucial counterweight to management. It is considered a sign of corporate high-mindedness to have a large number of outside directors, and the rules of the New York Stock Exchange require listed

companies to have outside directors participate in certain management activities. Also, as pressure has grown for corporations to acknowledge a responsibility to society as well as to shareholders, outside directors have come to fill that function as well. Minority representation on corporate boards has doubled in the past ten years, for example; female representation has tripled.

Amazingly, the most astringent critics of the American corporation seem to accept the theological view that the board of directors runs things. Thus the frequent demands for "corporate democracy," under which workers and the community would be represented on corporate boards. More amusing than amazing is the obsession with interlocking directorates. Because of their belief in the theological model of the corporate board, agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department, along with citizen's groups such as Ralph Nader's Corporate Accountability Research Group, scrutinize boards closely, keeping a weather eye out for the "interlock"—putatively a mechanism by which corporations attempt to control markets and destroy Western culture.

In its elementary form—the Direct Interlock—a single individual sits on the boards of two or more companies. There are two ways to do this. The Horizontal Interlock, contrary to what its name suggests, is not performed lying down. It is accomplished in the sitting position by a single individual who pulls up a chair to the board tables of two competing companies. Symmetrically enough, the lexicon of antitrust also comprehends and condemns the Vertical Interlock, in which a director of a manufacturing company might also be a director of a bank or a supplier of raw material, thus obtaining an unfair advantage for one or both.

Best of all is the Indirect Interlock, which, for sheer virulence, enjoys the special opprobrium of the watchdogs. In this case, a director of Company A and a director of Company B sit and conspire together on the board of Company C. With a little imagination and some latitude as to just how indirect one is willing to be, an indirect interlock can be found almost anywhere one looks. For that reason, they compare very favorably as a subject of investigation with, for example, the single-bullet theory of the Kennedy assassination. As a result, Congress will fund a study of interlocks about once every decade. In spite of the routine conclusion of the study that interlocking directorships will shortly put an end to life as we know it, no new legislation on the subject ever seems to emerge.

FROM THE compensation they get for their services, you would suspect that outside directors were indeed subverting democracy to earn their keep. The director of a New York Stock Exchange company typically gets between $15,000 and $25,000 just for serving on the board. If a director goes so far as to attend a meeting, there will be an additional $500 to $1,000 each time around, thus adding $6,000 to $12,000 annually. If physical presence is not possible, some companies compensate directors who "attend" by telephone. The typical fee is somewhat less—$250—but the corporation pays for the call. Board members also serve on committees, and attendance at these meetings is paid for. Finally, some corporations pay their directors on a per diem basis for performing "other services." These can be worth an additional $800 a day to the director who figures out what they are and then performs them. Some directors even "double dip" by serving on the boards of both a corporate parent and its subsidiary. Juanita Kreps, for example, is on the boards of both UAL Inc. (parent) and United Airlines (subsidiary).

Board meetings are conducted with the splendor of a coronation and will introduce the outside directors to a style of living to which they are by no means accustomed, even from their years in public service. The meeting site is usually some lavish corporate headquarters, a mansion—conference center, an exclusive club, or a private room in a posh hotel or restaurant. Often it is some faraway vacation spot: board meetings during winter months have a habit of being scheduled in Caribbean conference centers. Transportation to and from gatherings is strictly first-class, including chauffeured limousines where the necessity of surface travel prevents the use of private jet or helicopter. Rare wines and rare meat make the dullest agenda palatable.

The biggest bonanza, however, is for directors who, though already compensated for providing their wisdom as members of the board, also are retained as "consultants." Besides his $100,000 from Amax, Gerald Ford gets $120,000 from American Express and $50,000 from Twentieth Century-Fox, among others. All this on top of director's fees. In light of these numbers, one may be forgiven for wondering how tough Jerry Ford is with the managers who were percipient enough to recognize and reward a level of business expertise that is—let's be frank—not obvious from his résumé. After all, what did the stockholders ever do for him?

Similarly, a senior partner from a corporation's law firm who also sits on the board is probably not unaware that the same folks who are requesting his approval are signing his checks. (For Big Board companies, these run to millions of dollars a year.) Nor is a senior officer of a corporation's principal lender, who has probably approved the financing for management's projects, likely to disagree with the people who convinced him they were such a good idea in the first place. But the reality of how boards work, rather than any crude financial calculation, is what guarantees that management will be protected from excessive nosiness.

FIRST OF ALL, and by definition, outside directors have other things to do. (Ford may be the exception that proves the rule here.) For example, although Stephen Bechtel, Jr., sits on

IBM's board, it is safe to assume that IBM's business affairs do not get his every attention. Since he is also the chairman and chief executive officer of the Bechtel Group, he presumably divides most of his time between tending to the activities of the giant construction firm and orchestrating this country's foreign policy. IBM's business only gets such attention as he has left, and that must be spread rather thin, given how frequently most boards meet.

The full board of a corporation listed on the New York Stock Exchange usually meets ten to twelve times a year. On top of this, its various committees—which deal with audits, management compensation, nomination of directors, etc.—may meet from two to five times a year. As a result, an outside director who sits on two committees is obliged to attend as many as twenty meetings a year. Given the reality of travel time to and from meetings and the hypothesis of preparation for them, this is a heavy commitment for someone whose principal occupation lies elsewhere. According to a 1976 survey of ninety-four companies with assets of over a billion dollars each, the average director claims to devote about 140 hours, or fifteen business days, a year to board duties. Not much time to supervise the likes of IBM.

But even fifteen days is an implausible claim. The fourteen outside directors on IBM's board average five directorships apiece, thereby theoretically obligating themselves to spending seventy-five business days a year on activities unrelated to their principal occupations. One IBM director, William T. Coleman, Jr., in addition to being a senior partner in a major Los Angeles law firm, O'Melveny and Myers, serves on *nine* corporate boards. If in 1981 he made it to all of the scheduled gatherings of the boards and committees on which he sits, he would have attended 148 meetings. Measured by the alleged director's average, he also would have spent 135 business days—more than half of the 248 regular working days in the year—on business outside of his law practice. Coleman told me he spends 15 percent of his time on boardsmanship. No doubt he works hard, but unless he works 900 days a year, 15 percent of his time doesn't add up to fifteen days per board.

The burden of meeting attendance alone suggests that the average board member may find it difficult to squeeze in much directing between trips to the airport. It is therefore fortunate for our airborne director population that management does everything within its power to relieve them of the additional duty of having to prepare for all of these meetings.

The main relief method is the "last-minute meeting package." Although meeting agendas are distributed several weeks in advance, they are not very helpful in identifying the issues at stake. A "Report of the Compensation Committee" sheds little light on the merits of management's latest self-aggrandizing proposal. About seventy-two hours before the day of the meeting, when the Federal Express people finally deliver several pounds of densely worded memoranda, it is too late to read them, much less give any thought to their contents.

Nevertheless, against the possibility that a director should manage to wade through the meeting package and arrive at the meeting with some questions for the authors, management has a few additional fallback defenses. The atmosphere at the typical board meeting hardly conduces to the free give-and-take of open discussion. It more resembles a tobacco auction with lawyers.

The board members are all too busy to waste time on idle chatter. Few are well prepared. Some have jet lag. The rest are distracted by the knowledge that as soon as the business part of the agenda ends, luncheon will be served. The chairman moves through the agenda at breakneck speed.

Management presentations are technical, clipped, and abrupt ("This fine lot of broadleaf tobacco . . ."). After each item, the chairman invites a motion ("I have three. Who'll give me five? Five?"). They vote ("Five! Once, twice . . ."). And the chairman moves on ("Sold, American!").

Should anyone attempt to break the rhythm with a question, the lawyers wheel into play.

The role of the corporation's lawyer at a board meeting is like that of Cerberus at the gates of Hades. With the same vigor as the three-headed dog that bars souls from Paradise, the three-piece-suited lawyers defend the sanctity of the minutes from inopportune comments.

Anyone questioning a management proposal will be met with a quick burst of jargon: "Good thought, Mr. Smith, but we'd run into a real big 10-b-5 problem if we try it that way." Next comes the promise of a legal memorandum: "Young Simpson's done a memo on it. It's only a few hundred pages long. Why don't I send it on and you can phone me directly if you have any questions." The inquiring voice is stifled, the minutes remain pristine, and the clatter of luncheon china fills the silence as the business portion of the meeting ends.

WHAT LITTLE time and energy outside directors can devote to company affairs is often deflected into the work of board committees. By law, outsiders are required to sit on the audit committee. Often outside directors are also given the less threatening chore of seeking out their own by serving on nominating committees, the purpose of which is to find people like Jerry Ford. But the real magnetic north of the outside director's compass is something variously called the Corporate Public Policy Committee or the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee. Its basic purpose is to lament, but not to correct, the wrongs the corporation perpetrates on the larger society.

This is the ideal assignment for directors who are at sea on most business issues. It is also a ghetto for directors who are black, female, or both. For example, five of the seven boards on which Juanita Kreps serves have such a committee, and she sits on four of them,

losing out on number five only to Vernon Jordan, Jr., who not only is black but has been shot, and to Jane Cahill Pfeiffer, who is white but female.

Being an outside director of a large corporation has no obvious disadvantages. While it is true that meeting-attendance is time-consuming and is indeed encouraged by the practice most corporations follow of reporting slackers to the stockholders, the time consumed is hardly less pleasant than time spent on a luxury cruise. The only real disadvantage is the risk of being held liable for an error in judgment in the exercise of a board vote. Directors, after all, are supposed to be the guardians of the shareholders' interests. Remember? Potential accountability for, say, a decision to commit billions of dollars to a financial rathole would seem to be a serious matter, but the direst contingencies have been well anticipated. To begin with, corporations insure their directors and officers for the defense costs of both civil and criminal litigation arising from their official actions. Although insurance of this kind was once frowned upon as encouraging managerial laxity, it is now standard—at no small expense. Amax paid $191,733 in premiums in 1980 to protect its officers and directors from irate shareholders.

Defense costs would seem small recompense, of course, if a director found himself stuck with a billion-dollar uninsured judgment. That rueful likelihood, however, has been all but eliminated by the rule of law that relieves a nonemployee board member of accountability so long as he has acted in good faith, and in reliance on information supplied by others, such as the corporation's lawyers and accountants. In other words, so long as a director is not stealing or acting strictly on his own (and no single director's vote would be effectual), an outside director will never be accountable for foolishly squandering corporate funds, or for anything else. The idiot director is the darling of the law.

A WELL-KNOWN retired or ousted public official really is the ideal board member. A corporate executive can give the shareholders an opportunity to elect a former president of the United States to their board—and he can do so with the confidence that the new director will be unlikely to interfere with management's decisions. Slightly less prominent people are also good—especially if they are slightly busier as well. Likewise, the corporate executive can select a union official, a woman, or a black, to appease a troublesome pressure group at no cost in terms of corporate control.

The shareholders presumably are pleased with the stature that a former president lends to the board. The new director is pleased with his new risk-free income and perquisites. And for all their corporate self-interest, managers also rather like clubbing around with people of international standing ("Jerry Ford told me at a board meeting the other day . . .").

Of course, things might not always be so rosy. In the case of the multibillion-dollar Penn Central bankruptcy, the Securities and Exchange Commission placed much of the blame on the shoulders of a board that regarded its functions as honorary and failed to involve itself in the actual management of the company.

Business mavens have expressed wonder at what the board of International Harvester may have been amusing itself with while the corporation was sliding into bankruptcy. And some observers of the current merger fever see managements aggrandizing or protecting themselves in disregard of the interests of stockholders, and look in vain for the board that finally says, "No."

But meanwhile, boards of directors continue in their nondirecting, neither conspiring to rule the economy through interlocking directorates nor responsibly overseeing management. And maybe someday soon Sylvester Stallone and Dave Winfield will show up on proxy statements as management-endorsed director nominees. ■

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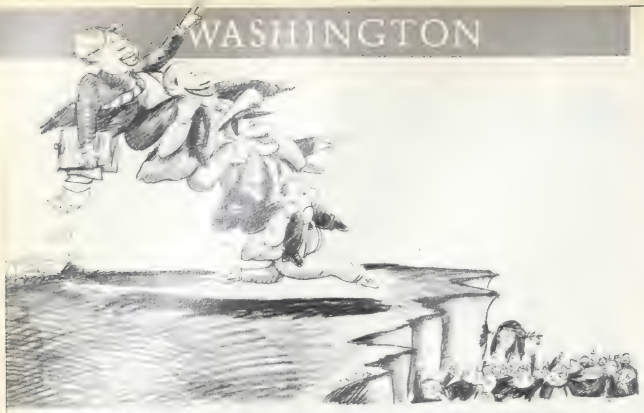
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HOW TO BE A ONE-TERM PRESIDENT

by Charles Peters

What the Reagan administration can learn from the Carter people's memoirs.

THE MODERN presidency is starting to take on a horrible broken-record quality. From Richard Nixon's administration through the present one, each White House crew, whatever its ideological bent, seems to have entered office grinning with confidence, but ignorant of the history and mechanics of the office. Each has gone on to repeat the mistakes and failures of previous administrations.

This is certainly the cycle strongly suggested by Hamilton Jordan's revealing memoir, *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency*.* Jimmy Carter and his advisers entered office blissfully unaware of the experience of all of their predecessors except Nixon, whose example they were determined to avoid. Never having learned the lessons of the past, and ill equipped by their own experience, they also seem to have been remarkably immune to the lessons that should have been drummed into their heads by what was happening to them every day.

* G. P. Putnam, $16.95.

The most important of these lessons has to do with how presidents go about making important decisions—which is, after all, what we elect them to do. Conventional, by-the-book leaders and other born losers rely exclusively on the official chain of command to provide the necessary information, choosing from among the "options" offered them. John Kennedy began his presidency this way, but he discovered that a president who wants to find out if the Bay of Pigs is a good idea shouldn't ask Allen Dulles, the man who originally suggested it.

Yet according to Jordan, when Cyrus Vance recommended to Carter that the Shah of Iran be admitted to the United States for medical treatment, guess who Carter asked to "double-check" the soundness of the medical recommendation? And when Carter faced his most important military decision—whether or not to undertake the Iranian hostage rescue mission—he went right down the chain of command, from Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to Colonel Charles Beckwith, leader of the Delta commandos.

Charles Peters is Editor in chief of the Washington Monthly, *and the author of* How Washington Really Works, *published by Addison-Wesley.*

The problem with this approach, of course, is that the people in the chain of command have a natural tendency, if not to cover up, certainly not to emphasize the weakness of the projects they sponsor. In the military, the problem is compounded by a "can do" spirit that makes many of the best officers so determined to overcome the weaknesses in their plans (and so confident of their ability to do so) that they convince themselves the weaknesses aren't even worth mentioning to their superiors. Jordan describes the inevitable reaction to Carter's down-the-line request that Gen. Jones check out the rescue plan, which would be comical if the result hadn't been the loss of eight lives and of considerable national prestige:

> *In mid-April, General David Jones had flown down to Fort Bragg to question the Delta Force leaders. On the way to the Delta camp, he said to Beckwith, who had picked him up, "Let's talk." They pulled off the road. "Charlie, tell me what you really think about the mission. Be straight with me."*
>
> *"Sir, we're going to do it! We want to do it, and we're ready."*

In fact, Jordan tells us, all the appropriate Pentagon officials assured Carter that the hostage rescue plan was fine. But we know now (thanks not so much to Jordan as to *Newsweek*'s revelations about the mission) that it was not fine, that some of its weaknesses were known in advance and could have been discovered by Carter had he not relied on the chain of command. In particular, the Marine helicopter pilots were not highly regarded by the army's Delta commandos, one of whom called the helicopters' final dress rehearsal "the sorriest display of professionalism I've ever seen." An advance party at the Desert One landing site had spotted six

vehicles traveling along the nearby highway that Carter thought was a "seldom used dirt country road." (In the first minutes of the landing, you will recall, three vehicles turned up, one of which got away.) Perhaps most chilling of all, the mission's planners appear to have been ready to risk far more in casualties than Carter was told.

CARTER didn't learn these facts because he is an orderly engineer—a bureaucrat at heart—a man who abhors the irregularity of going outside channels. Successful presidents, however, have tended to be less conventional. Franklin Roosevelt is famous for having exploited relationships of minimal mutual esteem —like those of Harry Hopkins and Harold Ickes, or Sumner Welles and Cordell Hull—by asking each rival to tell him what was wrong with the other's pet projects. FDR would have been sure to have used a similar technique to smoke out people who were likely to be critical of the shah's doctors, or of Beckwith's plan.

FDR did not hesitate to go outside channels because, unlike any president since, he had worked within the federal chain of command at the precise point—assistant cabinet secretary—where the policies of the White House bump up against the imperatives of the permanent government that is supposed to execute those policies. (FDR also held down this post, not for the normal stint of two years, but for seven and a half years.) Presidents without this experience have had to learn on the job—although at least one learned quickly: after the Bay of Pigs Kennedy began a policy of end-runs around the chain of command —including phone calls to lowly State Department desk officers—that served him well in his next military crisis, when Russian missiles were discovered in Cuba.

Carter, like Kennedy, ran into trouble early in his term by trusting the chain of command—specifically, by entrusting his energy plan to his energy "czar," James Schlesinger, and his welfare reform package to the HEW secretary, Joseph Califano. The damning aspect of Jordan's memoir is that it shows how, even by his final year in office, Carter had not changed his disastrous decision-making habits. We find him sitting in the Oval Office, checking off the decision memoranda sent up to him through channels, in a crisis rounding up the usual suspects and asking them for reassurance, as with Brown and Jones on the Iran raid.

What Carter needed—what all presidents really need—was trustworthy people on his staff who could get out of the White House, outside of the chain of command, and talk to those lower-level officials, military men, and even ordinary Americans, who know what is going on below the decks of government and have few incentives to deny it. James Fallows, Carter's chief speechwriter from 1976 to 1978, in fact offered to leave his job and become Carter's roving "eyes and ears," ferreting out such dissenting views and unpleasant truths. Fallows happens to have the combination of reportorial skill and distrust of expertise that it would take to do the job; others could surely have been found to do it also. Jordan and Carter didn't know what to do with the offer, and they ignored it. Yet certainly Fallows or someone like him, armed with a White House security clearance and the president's backing, could have found out early in 1980 much of what *Newsweek* was able to discover about the Iran raid two years later.

CARTER, like every recent president, also appears to have developed a neurosis about leaks. "After Watergate," he complains in his own memoirs,* "it seemed that every subordinate functionary in government wanted to be Deep Throat." This presidential affliction is generally treated with tolerance by the public and even the press—poor Chief Executive, hounded by disloyal subordinates and Washington gossip-mills—a sympathetic attitude that Ronald Reagan has tried to perpetuate. But leakophobia is just another symptom of a president who misunderstands the government. In a chain of command where the normal tendency at each level is to suppress information inconvenient for higher levels to know, leaks are often the only way this information can get from frustrated subordinates at the lower and middle levels to the president, the Congress, and the public. Except for the one percent of leaks that involve genuine national security secrets (the sailing schedule of submarines and the like), leaks, and the illicit channels of communication they represent, are valuable enough to be encouraged, rather than discouraged, by a conscientious leader.

A related lesson that at least the four most recent presidents have seemed doomed to learn for themselves, is that cabinet government does not work. It doesn't work because each department has its own agenda, and its own constituency, and unless given strong central direction it is no more likely to efficiently carry out unpleasant orders sent down the chain of command than it is to pass unpleasant information up the chain. During the Ford-Carter transition, Richard Cheney, Ford's chief of staff, tried to tell Jordan the facts of life about such matters, but Jordan ignored him. Jordan later became aware of his error, and attempted to pass this knowledge on after the American people elected yet another candidate who had pledged to restore cabinet government. He describes the scene in *Crisis*:

> *I was thumbing through a box of personal memos one day when I heard the door open. I peered over the box and there were Ed Meese and Jim Baker looking around.... "Hope we didn't interrupt you," Meese added quickly. "We were just checking out the offices before we made staff assignments."*
>
> *"As I remember it," I said, "assigning the offices was more difficult than choosing the cabinet." They both smiled. "You're*

* *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President.* Bantam, $22.50.

right," Baker said. "Well, we need to move on," Meese said. "By the way," I said, "I told Jack Watson to tell both of you that Dick Cheney gave me some good advice four years ago that we ignored. I'd be glad to do the same if you'd like." "Good idea," said Meese. "Why don't we try to get together next week for lunch. I'll check my schedule and call you."

Needless to say, Meese never called. (For his part, Carter has told *Time* that he tried to talk directly to Reagan about what he had learned over four years, but he got back Reagan's famed glazed-eye stare. Reagan only wanted to talk about what a great government the South Koreans had.)

Reagan's reliance on recommendations from his cabinet officers, approved through the regular chain of command with little or no review by the most important White House staff members, quickly resulted in two major embarrassments for his administration: the decision to favor tax exemptions for segregated schools, and the equally short-lived suggestions for Social Security cutbacks. The latter mistake could easily go down as Reagan's Bay of Pigs—it so frightened the elderly that it may have removed one of the nation's most pressing problems from the political agenda for the duration of Reagan's term in office.

Soon after these blunders, some Reagan insiders were conceding that cabinet government wasn't working out as well as they had hoped. And on July 18, 1982, a little less than a year and a half after Reagan's inauguration, Lou Cannon of the *Washington Post*, the reporter closest to the Reagan men, announced that cabinet government had been quietly buried. At least until the next president comes along.

IN TWO other important instances that Jordan touches on in *Crisis*, the Carter White House failed to learn from experience, even though the lessons didn't involve history, or bureaucracy, but rather Carter's own weaknesses—of which Jordan, at least, was well aware. One failure resulted from Carter's inadequacies as a speechmaker (where he consistently ranged from bad to terrible) as opposed to his ability to handle press conferences (where, as in his Billygate performance, he could be truly masterful).

Jordan had observed the difference as early as 1966, at an Elks Club lunch in Georgia:

> *Carter's speech was halting, his voice so soft that I had to strain to hear him. He rambled on with apparent uncertainty for ten minutes. I was thoroughly unimpressed, but when he started taking questions from the floor and answering them directly and thoughtfully for nearly an hour, I realized that this was a man of considerable intelligence, who had a common sense approach.*

But having been aware of this difference for up to fourteen years, why did Carter's staff permit him to commit public hari-kari in that terrible speech to the 1980 Democratic Convention? You will remember "Hubert Horatio Hornblower" as its low point—but the real question is why Carter opted to make a long, conventional, scripted speech at all.

In the other instance, the fault appears to have been Carter's alone. In June of 1980, according to *Crisis*, Jordan wrote a memo on the lessons from the 1976 campaign:

> *You were at times strident and personal in your attacks on President Ford. Because Ford was widely perceived as being a "good man," rhetoric directed at Ford that seemed personal and harsh hurt us. I believe that we will find ourselves in a similar posture in the fall campaign, when anything that smacks of a personal attack on Reagan will be counterproductive.*

Carter of course ignored this advice, a blunder that ranked along with the Hornblower speech and the Amy debate as one of the three major causes of his defeat.

Actually, Carter's major sin in the debate was not, I think, his ref-

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Inherent in the decision is the fact that the sobering problem of America's first strike policies will probably continue past Mr. Reagan unless something radically done by the people to change the war policies of big business in the United States.

erence to his daughter, but rather his appeal to the politics of selfishness. You could almost see Carter mentally checking off the interest groups—women, unions, teachers, the elderly—as he delivered coded messages designed to appeal to the various Democratic constituencies. At the time, it was reported that Carter adopted this strategy mainly on the advice of his pollster, Pat Caddell. But Jordan says the approach had long been supported by many others in the White House—including Stuart Eizenstat, Anne Wexler, and Jack Watson. They would, Jordan recalls, often begin their analysis of a Carter speech with comments like "It's a good speech but the president didn't mention the ERA," or "The president didn't say anything about the labor movement," or "What about the minorities and environmentalists, and the need for a Department of Education?"

During the spring and summer of 1979, when his presidency seemed to be collapsing around him, Carter held a series of meetings at the White House, and later at Camp David, seeking the advice of people outside the government on what to do about the national "malaise." I happened to attend the first one. Daniel Bell, John Gardner, Bill Moyers, Christopher Lasch, Haynes Johnson, and Jesse Jackson were there, along with Caddell, Jody Powell, Rosalynn Carter, and the president. It was a memorable occasion, in that some very strong egos and axes that could have been ground were largely subordinated to the search for words that might reach the president and make him understand what we were practically unanimous in feeling: "Don't blame the malaise on the public; blame yourself." The underlying point, I think, was that of course the American people can be selfish, but they want their president to summon their best, and not appeal to their worst.

Beneath Carter's courteous replies it was clear he was annoyed and defensive. The words were wasted, and the lesson, like the others, went unlearned. ■



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BOYCOTT COCAINE

AMONG trendy young professionals in our major cities, there is no stigma attached to using cocaine. In particular, the hip lawyers, doctors, movie stars, and so on who use the drug are not deterred, or even bothered much, by the mere fact that it happens to be illegal. But perhaps they will be receptive to a more fashionable approach. After all, many cocaine consumers are the same sort of people who will boycott lettuce or grapes because farm workers are underpaid, or a cosmetic because the company tortures rabbits, or tuna to protest the killing of dolphins. People boycott the multinational Nestle company because they don't like the way it markets its powdered infant formula. But the way everybody's favorite white powder with a retail value of $100 a gram is marketed makes Nestle look like a UNICEF project.

Most of the coke sold in America originates in Bolivia and Colombia, two countries whose preeminence in the drug trade is due mainly to the ruthlessness of their native practitioners. Colombian drug entrepreneurs, in particular, are so vicious that even mafiosi keep their distance. In December 1975, Colombian gangsters broke into the New York home of Oscar Toro, an expatriate Colombian who was making a fortune importing coke from his native land. The thugs stole $15,000 in cash, abducted Toro's ten-year-old son and a seventeen-year-old baby-sitter, and hanged his five-year-old daughter with a length of nylon Christmas wrapping. The son and baby-sitter turned up nine days later, frozen solid, in an abandoned post office. Both had been bound and strangled, and the baby-sitter had been raped. Toro, who was away from his home at the time of the incident, was too good a businessman to offer any help to the police.



Murder is as much a part of cocaine culture as tiny silver spoons and rolled-up hundred-dollar bills. There is seldom a major coke bust that doesn't also turn up an arsenal of automatic weapons. Last year in Miami, the cocaine capital of the Northern Hemisphere, a quarter of the city's 614 murders were committed with machine guns. There's so much drug-inspired bloodshed in southern Florida that the Dade County medical examiner was forced to rent a refrigerated truck trailer to store corpses he couldn't squeeze into the morgue.

Coke-related mayhem isn't confined to the United States. In the first four months of 1979, 240 people died in drug feuding in the Colombian resort town of Santa Maria, and similar bloodbaths happen all the time. The coup that toppled the Bolivian government in 1980 is widely believed to have been concerned less with control of the government than with control of the country's multibillion-dollar cocaine industry, which is run by military officers. No one knows for sure how many people die every year in the war for the American coke market, but the figure could easily be over a thousand.

The victims are not all rival businessmen, who might only be getting what they deserve. Cocaine hit men tend to be casual in their aim. "Children have been killed in cross fires, and so have innocent adults," says Brent Eaton, a special agent in the Miami division of the Drug Enforcement Administration. "We've had machine-gun fights as people were driving down expressways here in town. We've had people riddled with machine-gun bullets as they were waiting for traffic lights."

At the very least, cocaine has rent the social and economic fabric of two South American countries and fueled the decay of considerable sections of the United States. To buy cocaine is to subsidize a network of death and despair. Snorting cocaine is at least as bad for the planet as wearing a coat made from an endangered species. Join the cause. Boycott cocaine.

David Owen

HOT AIRBAGS

SHOULD the government require that new cars be equipped with airbags—cushions that inflate on impact to protect passengers in a crash? Like nuclear power, this is an issue where reasonable minds may differ, but reasonable minds are hard to find. To Ralph Nader, airbags have provided a litmus test of political virtue ever since the last Corvair rolled off the assembly line in the mid-Sixties. Nader bitterly denounced his protégée Joan Claybrook for not immediately requiring the devices when she was director of highway safety for Jimmy Carter. Opponents of airbags see them as the prime example of statist meddling. *Car and Driver*, a magazine for auto enthusiasts, refers to Nader and Claybrook as "Safety Nazis."

It has been an odd debate. The Naderites, traditional foes of bloodless "cost-benefit" tests for government regulations, rely heavily on

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such calculations. They claim that requiring "passive restraints"—either airbags or "automatic seat belts" that encircle passengers when the car door is closed—will save 7,000 to 12,000 lives a year, which, at $480,000 per life, more than justifies the billion-dollar annual cost of the devices. Meanwhile, opponents cite the sort of noneconomic virtues ignored by the cost-benefit arithmetic that they usually favor. Requiring airbags would be paternalistic and coercive, they complain. Virtually all of the safety gains would come from protecting drivers who now fail to wear ordinary seat belts. Conservative airbag opponents even argue for equity over efficiency, saying it is unfair to force drivers who currently wear belts to pay for the protection of drivers too dumb to buckle up.

Both sides can cite impressive statistics. On the one hand, only 11 percent of motorists now use belts, so automatic devices should make a big difference. On the other hand, the initial road experience with airbags was not encouraging: there were four fatalities in the test fleet, which works out to a death rate five times as high as that for ordinary belted drivers, and almost twice the rate for drivers who don't wear belts.

On the one hand, the relatively simple automatic seat belts would be cheaper and more reliable than the complicated airbags. On the other hand, drivers could easily disconnect the automatic belts. On the other hand . . .

ABOUT all that can be said with confidence on this difficult issue is that our society's method of resolving it has been insane. Time and again, the crucial moves have been made neither by elected officials nor by experts, but by federal judges who are neither elected nor expert. And after thirteen years of administrative proceedings and lawsuits, virtually nothing has been decided.

Here's how the years went by. In 1966, Congress passed a law authorizing the secretary of transportation to mandate auto safety devices if they were "reasonable, practicable, and appropriate"—a typical legislative vacuity that avoids the messy job of deciding what, exactly, to do. In 1969, Richard Nixon's Transportation Department began to consider a regulation requiring airbags or automatic belts, which it got around to issuing in 1972. However, when agencies write regulations—as opposed to when Congress writes *laws*—judges are empowered to "review" them to see if they reflect "reasoned decision-making." A federal court of appeals decided that, under the 1972 rule, the testing procedures were not "objective"—and it was back to the drawing board. The Ford administration eventually scrapped the airbag rule, but in 1977 the Carter administration revived it, and after only two more years of litigation it was approved by the courts, just in time for Carter's departure from office. This was ten years after the rule was first proposed. Time flies when you're having fun.

Predictably, the Reagan administration quickly rescinded the airbag rule. Equally predictably, the safety lobbyists sued, and a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court —headed by Abner Mikva, a liberal congressman elevated to the bench by Carter—has now deemed the Reagan administration's decision "arbitrary and illogical," and ordered that the rule take effect anyway.

When conservatives rail against the imperial judiciary, this is the sort of thing they are talking about. Mikva's opinion strikes an arrogant, intellectually superior pose. He finds the Reagan administration's arguments "weak," its concerns "irrelevant." You get no sense, reading the opinion, that the election of 1980 ever happened, or that airbags are an issue on which a succession of conscientious officials could have reached different conclusions from the same evidence.

In the game of "judicial review," of course, the deck is stacked in favor of the judge. Precedents are always available that seem to require intensive judicial second-guessing. Mikva professed alarm that the Reagan rule had been adopted so soon after the Carter administration's contrary decision. A few weeks later, another federal judge struck down another Reagan regulation, complaining that it altered a policy that was "longstanding."

The hypocrisy of the system runs several layers thick. The Reaganites pretend that they are reacting to "changed factors" when they really just want to change the rule. The Naderites pretend they want to vindicate the "will of Congress," although no Congress has had the guts to actually vote for airbags, and many of the liberal legislators who spoke up in favor of the devices have since been removed from office by the voters. Finally, Mikva calls on the administration to conduct further "analysis" of the evidence, as if, after over a decade of legal proceedings, after approximately sixty "notices of proposed rulemakings," hearings, and amendments, not to mention a 280-page "regulatory impact analysis," what we need is more debate.

Oh, yes. Mikva's ruling has been appealed to the Supreme Court.

R. M. K.

HEADACHES

IT'S HARD not to feel sorry for Johnson & Johnson, the company that makes Tylenol. What could be a worse nightmare for any manufacturer than police patrolling the streets with bullhorns, warning the citizenry that people who use your product are dropping dead? Johnson & Johnson is blameless in this bizarre episode. Most Tylenol pills were never even under suspicion, and any danger at all is now long past. Yet the brand is probably ruined.

On the other hand, Tylenol's extraordinary 37 percent market share was a triumph of empty imagery—convincing people that Tylenol is different from other over-the-counter painkillers, when in fact it is identical to some and no better than the rest for most people. J&J made it easy for some nut to replace their painkiller with cyanide by market-

ing Extra-Strength Tylenol as a capsule filled with powder, rather than the traditional tablet. There was no medical reason for this. The only purpose was to make it seem like a more serious drug.

Now Extra-Strength Tylenol production is shut down, while the factories that make "Anacin-3"—precisely the same stuff, but previously less than one percent of the market—are operating around the clock. In a way, it serves J&J right: those who live by image shall perish by image.

The whole painkiller market is the reductio ad absurdum of American advertising. There are only two over-the-counter painkillers: aspirin and acetaminophen (the ingredient in Tylenol). Aspirin gives a few people upset stomachs, whereas acetaminophen won't work on inflammation the way aspirin does. But for headaches and the vast majority of other uses, the two are indistinguishable. Yet a whole marketing jungle of rival brands and exotic claims has blossomed from these basic powders.

Labels such as "extra strength," or "maximum strength," or "arthritis strength" just mean larger pills, or useless added ingredients like caffeine. Three plain aspirin are just as strong as two of any "extra strength" pill now for sale, and much cheaper.

The longtime industry champ in marketing malarkey is the American Home Products Corporation, maker of Anacin, famous for containing "more of the pain reliever doctors recommend most"—i.e., aspirin. Anacin has 400 milligrams of aspirin, compared with 325 milligrams in most tablets. (The great marketing stroke that made Extra-Strength Tylenol such a success was putting *500* milligrams in each pill.) At the overpriced Park Avenue pharmacy downstairs, $1.49 will buy you thirty tablets of Anacin or 250 tablets of Norwich brand aspirin. So for the cost of two Anacin tabs, or 800 milligrams, you can have sixteen and two-thirds tabs of Norwich—over 5,000 milligrams of "the pain reliever doctors recommend most."

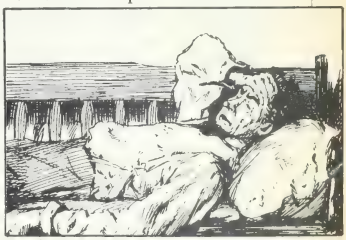
ANACIN'S LATEST television ad campaign is another skilled demonstration of how to leave a false impression without actually lying. It also breaks new ground in bad taste. The ads feature Patricia Neal, the actress known for her courageous recovery from a stroke.

"You've all experienced pain," she says in one. "Isn't that why you admire anyone [pause] or any*thing* [pause] that can fight pain and win?" In other ads, she refers to herself as "a fighter," and goes on to share that proud label with Anacin and those who use it. There is no direct suggestion that Anacin can cure strokes. But Ms. Neal tells of talking to "Anacin's research scientists" and learning how "Anacin works on the basic chemistry of your pain . . . with more pain reliever than any regular headache tablet with or without aspirin."

Patricia Neal now joins the Anacin hall of fame, along with the commercial (1969) about "a housewife's headache" ("Man: You can't tell me my wife's got it rough. When I get home she looks terrific"); and the one (1970) about "an exceptional formula that starts a chain reaction of relief"; and the series (1972) featuring a doctor's scales and demonstrating how Anacin "adds an extra core of this specific fastacting ingredient against pain."

The Federal Trade Commission ruled in 1981 that Anacin's claims to be better than aspirin are deceptive, seeing how it *is* aspirin. The FTC's decision was not reached in haste: it followed eight years of contemplation and came embodied in sixty-two single-spaced pages of close reasoning. Consumer surveys have been commissioned; hearings and cross-examinations have been held; millions of dollars have been spent belaboring the obvious.

Nevertheless, American Home Products is—of course—appealing the matter through the courts. If AHP really thought that consumers understand its commercials the way its lawyers say they do, the company would fire its advertising agency. The lawyers argue, for example, that even though the ads say Anacin contains more pain reliever, this does not give anyone the idea that Anacin is more effective. The company also hired an "expert on advertising interpretation," one Dr. Smith, who testified to the FTC that, according to his "image and penetration data," consumers do not think that Anacin is something other than aspirin. This despite millions spent to give precisely that impression. Nor, according to Dr. Smith, do consumers take Anacin's assertion that it is better than "the other leading products" to mean that Anacin is the best product. Heaven for-



fend that anyone should get that idea about Anacin, say Anacin's lawyers. Well, that's what lawyers are for.

President Reagan's FTC chairman, James C. Miller III, has proposed legislation to make it much harder for the Commission to prevent deceptive advertising. When the FTC bans a deceptive ad, Miller says, "Consumers are hurt. . . . In addition to being deprived of product information, consumers are also deprived of their right to receive that information."

Under Miller's proposed rule, consumers would not be denied the "information" that Anacin relieves tension, "helps the best of you come through," "has more of the drug doctors themselves most choose," "rushes to your head more pain reliever than the leading aspirin tablet," and so on. Instead, they would be denied the information—which the FTC now proposes to require in future ads—that the painkiller in Anacin is aspirin and nothing more. And if that notion of protecting consumer rights gives you a headache, take two Tylenol and call Chairman Miller in the morning.

M. E. K.

DIRTY WORK SHOULD BE SHARED

In a society of equals, garbage is everyone's business. by Michael Walz

NOT MANY of us who are committed to equality would be happy living under a regime that could enforce it literally: the state as Procrustean bed. Equality's opponents are quick to describe the repression that literal equality would require and the drab and fearful conformity it would produce. A society of equals, they say, would be a world of false appearances where people who were not in fact the same would be forced to look and act as if they were. And the falsehoods would have to be enforced by an elite or vanguard whose members pretended in turn that they weren't really there. It is not an inviting prospect.

But that is not what we mean by equality. There are egalitarians, of course, who have made their peace with repression, but theirs is a grim creed and insofar as it is understood, it is unlikely to attract many adherents. Egalitarians don't usually have in mind a leveled, conformist society. Egalitarianism aims to eliminate not *all* differences but a particular set of differences, and a different set in different times and places. Its targets are always specific: aristocratic privilege, capitalist wealth, bureaucratic power, racial or sexual supremacy. In each of these cases what is at stake is the ability of some people to dominate their fellows. It's not the fact that there are rich and poor that generates egalitarian politics, but the fact that the rich "grind the faces of the poor," impose poverty upon them, command their deferential behavior.

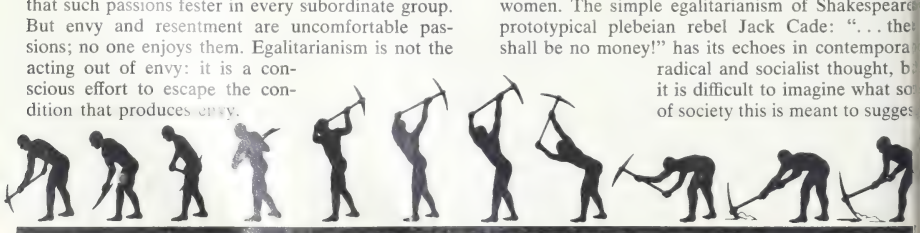
The experience of subordination lies behind the vision of equality. Opponents of the vision often claim that the animating passions of egalitarian politics are envy and resentment, and it's true enough that such passions fester in every subordinate group. But envy and resentment are uncomfortable passions; no one enjoys them. Egalitarianism is not the acting out of envy: it is a conscious effort to escape the condition that produces envy.

The aim of political egalitarianism is a soci free from domination. This is the lively hope nam by the word *equality*: no more bowing and scrapi fawning and toadying; no more fearful trembli no more high-and-mightiness. It is not a hope the elimination of differences; we don't all have be the same or have the same amounts of the sa things. For all important moral and political p poses, when no one possesses or controls the mea of domination, men and women are one anothe equals.

1. The Domain of Money

THE MEANS of domination vary. In other s cieties, they have been birth and bloo state power, divine grace. These all pl some role in our society today (along w others, such as education). But the means of dom nation we feel most strongly is money. "What I a and can do," wrote Marx, "is not at all determin by my individuality. I am ugly, but I can buy t most beautiful women for myself. Consequently, am not ugly. . . . I am stupid, but since money is t real mind of all things, how should its possessor stupid?"

Wherever money is used, it panders between i compatible things; it breaks into "the self-subsiste entities" of social life; it inverts individuality; " forces contraries to embrace." But that, of course, what money is for; that's why we use it. In mo neutral language, it is the universal medium of e change—and a great convenience too, for exchan is central to the life we share with other men a women. The simple egalitarianism of Shakespeare prototypical plebeian rebel Jack Cade: ". . . the shall be no money!" has its echoes in contempora radical and socialist thought, b it is difficult to imagine what so of society this is meant to sugges



What Shakespeare and Marx object to is the uni-
sality of the medium, not the medium itself. Con-
ved abstractly, money is simply a representation
value. Hence, it's not implausible to hold that
ery valued thing, every social good, can be rep-
ented in monetary terms. Such translations are
ide every day. Life itself has a value, and then
entually a price (different conceivably for different
es)—else how could we even think about insur-
ce and compensation?

At the same time, we also experience the univer-
ity of money as somehow degrading. Consider
car Wilde's definition of the cynic: "A man who
ows the price of everything and the value of
thing." That is too absolute; it's not cynical to
nk that price and value will sometimes coincide.
t often enough money fails to represent value; the
nslations are made, but as with good poetry,
mething is lost in the process.

Even in our capitalist society, the universality of
oney is undercut: there are things money can't
y. People can't buy their way out of the wartime
aft, for example; the 1863 Conscription Act per-
tting this induced a spontaneous popular back-
h. Similarly, you cannot legally sell your vote in
election. Despite the moral logic that any free
change in the marketplace is voluntary, and there-
re cannot be oppressive to either party, certain
changes of value for money are widely recognized
illegitimate. The question, therefore, is: what are
e proper boundaries for the domain of money?
ie egalitarian vision I wish to advance is one
at worries less about equality within the domain
money, and more about narrowing the bounda-
s of that domain. In particular, shouldn't society's
rst jobs be outside that domain?

II. Hard Labor

PEOPLE can work hard at almost any job. I can work hard writing this essay, and sometimes I have. But "hard" has another sense —as in "hard winter" and "hard heart"— here it means harsh, unpleasant, cruel, difficult to ndure. Thus the account in Exodus of Israel's op-ression: "And the Egyptians embittered their lives ith hard labor." Now the word describes jobs that 're like prison sentences, work that people don't ook for and wouldn't choose if they had even minimally attractive alternatives. This kind of work a negative good, and it commonly carries other egative goods in its train: poverty, insecurity, ill ealth, physical danger, dishonor, and degradation. nd yet it is socially necessary work; it needs to e done, and that means that someone must be ound to do it.

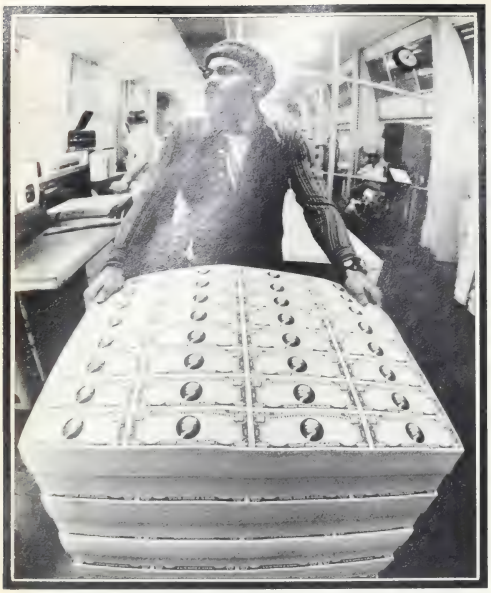
The traditional solution to this problem through-ut history has had the form of a simple equation: ie negative good is matched by the negative status of the people into whose hands it is thrust. Hard work is distributed to degraded people. Citizens are set free; the work is imposed on slaves, resident aliens, "guest workers"—outsiders all. Alternatively, the insiders who do the work are turned into "inside" aliens, like the Indian untouchables or American blacks after emancipation. In our society, women have been the most important group of "inside" aliens, doing the work that men disdained. Indeed, the household work that women traditionally have done—cooking, cleaning, caring for the sick and the old—makes up a substantial part of the hard work of the economy today, for which aliens are recruited (and women prominently among them).

The idea in all these cases is a cruel one: negative people for a negative good. Because of their nature or their social status, they deserve to do it, or they don't deserve not to do it, or they somehow qualify for it. It's not the work of citizens, free men, white men, and so on. When convicts do hard labor, we can at least argue that they deserve their punishment. But even they are not state slaves; their degradation is (most often) limited and temporary, and it is by no means clear that the most oppressive sorts of work should be assigned to them. And if not to them, surely to no one else. Indeed, if hard labor is held suitable for convicts, then it becomes an insult to suggest that ordinary men and women should do it.

At the same time, there is something attractive about a community whose members resist the work, even if this means shunting it off on outsiders. Such community members have a certain sense of themselves that rules out the acceptance of oppression; they refuse to be degraded and have the strength to sustain the refusal. Neither the sense of self nor the personal strength are all that common in human history. They represent a significant achievement of modern democracy, closely connected to economic growth, certainly, but also to a growing sense of human equality. It is sometimes said to be an argument against the welfare state that its members are unwilling to take on certain sorts of jobs. But surely that is a sign of success. Still, the work needs to be done. Who is to do it?

IT IS AN OLD egalitarian dream that no one will have to do it. We will solve the problem by abolishing the work, replacing men and women with machines wherever men and women find it unpleasant to be. Thus Oscar Wilde in his fine essay "The Soul of Man Under Socialism":

> *All unintellectual labor, all monotonous, dull labor, all labor that deals with dreadful things and involves unpleasant conditions, must be done by machinery. Machinery must work for us in the coal mines and do all sanitary services, and be a stoker of steamers, and clean the streets, and*



Money: "Every valued thing, every social good, can be represented in monetary terms. Such translations are made every day."

run messages on wet days and do anything that is tedious and distressing.

But that was always an unrealistic solution, for a great deal of hard work is required in the human services, where automation was never in prospect. Even elsewhere machines have not yet taken over all unpleasant toil.

If we set automation aside, the most common egalitarian argument is that unpleasant work should be shared, rotated among the citizens. Everyone should do it—except convicts, of course, who now have to be excluded so as to make sure that the work carries no stigma. This simple vision of equality has its beginning, I think, in the dangerous work of war. As we conscript young men for war, so, it's been said, we should conscript men and women generally for all those necessary jobs that are unlikely to attract volunteers. An army of citizens will replace the reserve army of the proletariat. This is an attractive proposal. But it could never work for all hard and dangerous jobs. We need to consider more complex ways of distribution that satisfy the demand for equality.

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III. Dangerous Work

SOLDIERING is a special kind of hard work. I many societies, in fact, it is not conceived t be hard work at all. It is the normal occupa tion of young men, their social function, int which they are not so much drafted as ritually ini tiated, and where they find the rewards of camara derie, excitement, and glory. In these societies, th notion of conscripts and the notion of volunteer would strike people as equally odd. Sometimes fighting is the special privilege of the elite; com pared with soldiering, every other kind of hard wor is considered degrading. Young men are energetic combative, eager to show off; fighting, for them, is o can be a form of play, and only the rich can affor to play all the time.

But the notion of war as the natural activity o young men or the sport of aristocrats doesn't fi modern warfare at all. For the most part, soldier have little opportunity for play; nor would their offi cers be happy with their playfulness. What they d is, in the strictest sense, hard work. Indeed, we migh think of trench warfare in World War I, or jungl warfare in World War II, as the first archetype o hardness.

Even when its true character is understood, how ever, soldiering is not a radically degraded activity Rank and file soldiers are often recruited from th lowest classes, or from outcasts or foreigners, an they are often regarded with contempt by ordinary citizens. But the perceived value of their work is sub ject to sudden inflation, and there is always the chance that they will one day appear the saviors of the coun try they defend. At those times, soldiering is also dangerous, and it is dangerous in a dramatic way that makes a special mark on our imaginations. This is why soldiering is the first form of hard work that citizens decide to share. Of course, conscription has other purposes too, above all to produce vast numbers of troops in a hurry. But its moral pur pose is to universalize or randomize the risks of war over a given generation of young men.

When the risks are of a different sort, however, the same purpose seems less pressing. Consider the case of coal mining. "The rate of accidents among miners is so high . . . ," wrote George Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, "that casualties are taken for granted as they would be in a minor war." It isn't as easy, though, to imagine this sort of work being shared like the work of war. Mining may not be highly skilled work, but it is certainly very difficult, and it's best done by men who have done it for a long time. It requires something more than "basic training." Nor does it make much sense to break in on the solidarity of miners. Work in the pits breeds a strong bond, a tight community that is not very welcoming to transients. That community is the great strength of miners. A deep sense of place

and clan and generations of class struggle have made for staying power. Miners are probably the least mobile of modern industrial populations. A conscript army of mine workers, even if it were possible, would not be an attractive alternative to the social life the miners have designed for themselves.

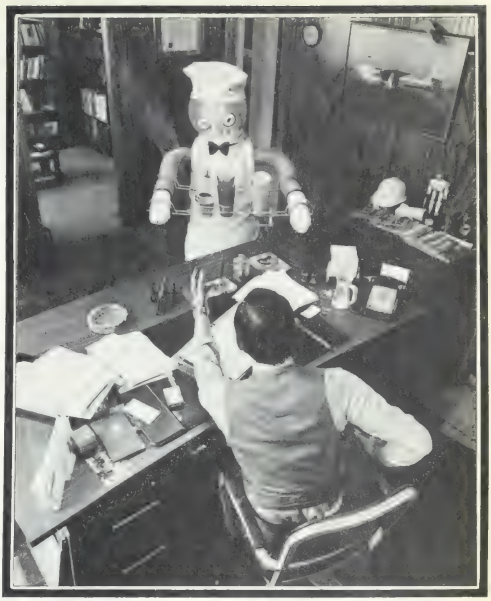
But there is a deeper reason why no politician has ever seriously proposed the conscription of coal miners. The risks that miners live with are not imposed by a public enemy, by other men and women who threaten us all. To some extent, indeed, the risks are imposed by negligent or profiteering owners, and then they are a political matter. But the obvious remedy is to regulate their operations and reduce the risks, not to conscript the miners and share the risks. And it makes sense to seek a similar remedy for the risks imposed by nature. In ancient Athens, the men who worked the silver mines were state slaves, permanently in the service of the city. Today miners are free citizens, but we might think of them, however the mines are owned, as citizens in the service of the nation. And then we might treat them as if they were conscripts, not sharing their risks but sharing the costs of the remedy: research into mine safety, health care designed for their immediate needs, early retirement, decent pensions, and so on. The same argument plausibly applies to other dangerous activities, whenever they are socially necessary—not to mountain climbing, then, but to construction work on bridges, tall buildings, deep-sea oil rigs, and so on. In all these cases, the casualty statistics may resemble those of war, but the everyday experience is different and so is our understanding of the work.

IV. Grueling Work

PEACETIME conscription is only potentially dangerous. What is being shared in society with a peacetime draft is the burden of service: the time spent, the difficult training, the harsh discipline. This raises the question: if the army is manned by conscripts, why shouldn't the roads be built, the sugarcane cut, the lettuce picked the same way?

Among political theorists, Rousseau made the strongest case for this, drawing on a moral argument that is central to his theory as a whole. People must share in socially necessary work, as they share in politics and war, if they are ever to be the citizens of a self-governing community. If political participation and military service are required, so is the *corvée*—mandatory labor for the state. Otherwise, society divides into masters and servants, the two groups caught alike in the trap of hierarchy and dependency. We know that the republic is in decay, Rousseau argued, when its citizens "would rather serve with their money than with their persons."

When it is necessary to march out to war, they pay troops and stay at home: when it is necessary to meet in council, they name deputies and stay at home. . . . In a country that is truly free, the citizens do everything with their own arms and nothing by means of money. . . . I am far from taking the common view: I hold enforced labor to be less opposed to liberty than taxes.



"All unintellectual labor, all monotonous, dull labor, all labor that deals with dreadful things and involves unpleasant conditions, must be done by machinery." Oscar Wilde.

J. P. Laffont-Sygma

The common view is that men and women are free only when they choose their own work. Taxes are the price of the choice, and the commutation of labor services into taxes is everywhere regarded as a victory for the common people. Rousseau's view is indeed radical, but it is undercut by an uncharacteristic vagueness. He never told us how much of the community's work would be shared among the citizens. Over what range of jobs would the *corvée* extend? We can imagine it extended so as to include every sort of hard work. Then the citizens would have to be organized into something like Trotsky's industrial army. There would be little room left for individual choice, and the command structure of the army would reproduce in new forms the old patterns of hierarchy and dependency. Rousseau almost certainly intended something more modest; he probably had in mind the sorts of work for which the *corvée* was historically used, like the building of the king's highways. A partial commitment, then, leav-

TIME OFF

Vacations have a short history, especially for ordinary men and women. As late as the 1920s, only a very few wage earners could boast of paid vacations. The arrangement is far more common today, a central feature of every union contract, and the practice of "going away," at least for a week or two, has also spread across class lines. In fact, vacations have become the norm, so that we are encouraged to think of weekends as short vacations and the years after retirement as a very long one. And yet the idea is new. The use of the word "vacation" to mean a private holiday dates only from the 1870s, the verb "to vacation" from the late 1890s.

It all started as an imitation of the aristocrat's retreat from court and city to country estate. Since, for the most part, bourgeois men and women (mostly) had no country estates, they retreated instead to seaside or mountain resorts. At the beginning, ideas about relaxation and pleasure were masked by ideas about the health-restoring qualities of fresh air and mineral or salt water. But the escape from city and town was soon popular for its own sake, and the entrepreneurial response slowly multiplied the number of resorts and cheapened the available amusements.

What is crucial about the vacation is its individualist (or familial) character, greatly enhanced, obviously, by the arrival of the automobile. Everyone plans his own vacation, goes where he wants to go, does what he wants to do.

But the vacation isn't the only form of leisure. It was literally unknown throughout most of human history, and the major alternative form survives even in the United States today. This is the public holiday. When ancient Romans or medieval Christians or Chinese peasants took time off from work, it was not to go away by themselves or with their families but to participate in communal celebrations. A third of their year, sometimes more, was taken up with civil commemorations, religious festivals, saint's days, and so on. These were their holidays; in origin holy days, and they stand to our vacations as public health to individual treatment or mass transit to the private car. They were provided for everyone in the same form, at the same time, and they were enjoyed together. We still have holidays of this sort, though they are in radical decline.

The most important surviving holiday is the Sabbath. According to Deuteronomy, the Sabbath was instituted in commemoration of the escape from Egypt. Slaves work without cease or at the behest of their masters, and so the Israelites thought it the first mark of a free people that its members enjoyed a fixed day of rest. The Sabbath is a collective good. It is, as Martin Buber said, "the common property of all." In ancient times, this included slaves and foreigners in the community as well.

Max Weber argued that strangers or resident aliens were required to rest in order to deny them any competitive advantage. There is no reason for saying this—no evidence in the sources—beyond the conviction, not always associated with Weber, that economic motives must in principle be paramount. But it is true that, even in a precapitalist economy, it would be difficult to guarantee rest to everyone without imposing it on everyone. Public holidays require coercion. That is why, as obligations and enforcements have declined, holidays have ceased to be public occasions, have been attached to weekends, have become undifferentiated pieces of individual vacations. One can see here an argument for "blue laws," which can be justified much as taxation is justified: both have the form of a charge on productive or wage-earning time for the sake of communal provision.

Holidays are a more egalitarian distribution of leisure than vacations because they can't be purchased: they are one more thing that money can't buy. They are enjoined for everyone, enjoyed by everyone. The history of the word "vacation," in fact, suggests how far we have come from such a communal notion of time off from work. In ancient Rome, the days on which there were no religious festivals or public games were called *dies vacantes*, empty days. The holidays by contrast, were full—full of obligation but also of celebration, full of things to do, feasting and dancing, rituals and plays. This was when time ripened to produce the social goods of shared solemnity and revelry. Who would give up days like that? We have lost that sense of fullness, and the days we crave are the empty ones, which we can fill by ourselves, as we please, alone or with our families.

But according to the ancient rabbis, the Sabbath is a foretaste of eternity. The messianic kingdom, which will come, as the old phrase has it, in the fullness of days, is a Sabbath without end—but not a vacation. **M.W.**



ıg more than enough time for the smallholders and raftsmen who inhabit Rousseau's ideal republic to ursue their own affairs. Though the work they hare would be real work, we can think of it as a ymbolic commitment.

If this is right, then the choice of symbols is very nportant. Road building was a good choice for Rousseau because it was the typical form of forced abor under the old regime. Men of noble birth were ı principle exempt; the bourgeoisie was in practice xempt. The work was imposed on the poorest and veakest of the king's subjects, and so it was expeienced as the most degrading kind of work. Were he citizens as a body to take it upon themselves, hey would free the poor not only from the physical abor but also from the stigma of the labor—from ristocratic disdain and the bourgeois imitation of ristocratic disdain. Work on the roads would still e undesirable—backbreaking, grueling, and opressive; it suggests the second archetype of hardess. But even a full-time commitment to it would ıo longer entail the disrespect of one's fellows. And hen the other entailments might gradually be cut off oo, for the citizens might be ready to pay for the oads they needed, and the workers might be ready o demand more pay. All this might happen if we ıdopted the *corvée* for the arduous jobs in our own society.

WE ALSO have evidence of a far more radical transformation in attitudes toward physical labor that not only did happen, but also happened in something like a Rousseauean community—the Israeli kibbutz. From its beginning, there was an emphasis n Zionism on the dignity of work. This aspect of Zionism aimed to create among Jews liberated from heir Diaspora oppression not a class in the Marxst sense, but a community. The kibbutz, or collective settlement, is the product of this emphasis. It represents an experiment in the transvaluation of values, the dignifying of work through the sharing of work. The creed of the early settlers was a "religion of labor" in which one took communion by working in the fields. And the hardest work was the most uplifting, spiritually, and socially too.

The first collectives were established in the early 1900s. By the 1950s, when Melford Spiro published his classic study *Kibbutz: Venture in Utopia*, the transvaluation of values was so successful that it was no longer necessary to require the members to share the physical labor of the kibbutz. Everyone who could work wanted to work; a callused hand was a badge of honor. Only jobs with inconvenient hours (dairymen, nightwatchmen) had to be rotated among the members. High school teachers, on the other hand, had to be conscripted, for teaching was far less honored than work in the fields—an amazing fact, given the culture of European Jews. Less amazing, kitchen work posed problems too.



"Hard work is distributed to degraded people. In our society, women have been the most important group of 'inside' aliens, doing the work that men disdained."

Dan Budnik-Woodfin Camp

It was crucial to the success of the kibbutz, I think, that each collective settlement was also a political community. It wasn't only the work that was shared, but decisions about the work. Hence the workers were free in that all-important sense that Rousseau calls moral liberty: the burdens they lived with were self-imposed. That's why the sharing could be total. In the case of a republican *corvée*, in a larger community and a more complex and differentiated economy, where the workers could participate only indirectly in decision-making, a partial sharing would be more appropriate.

The kibbutz is founded on a radical effort to transform a negative into a positive good. But there is one area where the transformation has not been successful. "Certain jobs are regarded as so distasteful," wrote Spiro, "that they are filled by a permanent rotation system. . . . the most notable instance is work in the [communal] kitchen and dining room, cooking, dishwashing, and serving." In the kibbutz that Spiro studied, women were drafted for a year at a time, men for two or three months, to do kitchen work. Now, sexual differentiation in work need not be a problem if it is freely chosen, and if the different jobs are equally respected. But the second condition didn't hold in this case. Kibbutz members were generally disdainful of bourgeois "graciousness" in eating; they had a Rousseauean uneasiness with anything that smacked of luxury. Kitchen work



Dangerous work: "miners are free citizens, but we might think of them as citizens in the service of the nation."

might have been more respected if its products were more highly valued—and perhaps there has been an improvement in its relative status as the hard edges of kibbutz ideology have softened. But cleaning up after a meal may just be distasteful, however tasty the meal itself. And other sorts of cleaning up may be distasteful too. Here, perhaps, kibbutz ideology comes up against a negative good that can't be transformed.

V. Dirty Work

In principle, there is no such thing as intrinsically degrading work; degradation is a cultural phenomenon. In practice, however, activities having to do with dirt, waste, and garbage have been the object of disdain and avoidance in just about every human society. The precise list will vary from one time and place to another. In India, for example, it includes the butchering of cows and the tanning of cowhide, jobs that have a rather different standing in Western cultures. But otherwise the characteristic occupations of the Indian untouchables suggest what we can think of as the third archetype of hard work: they are the scavengers and sweepers, the carriers of waste and night soil. George Bernard Shaw was perfectly right to say that "if all dustmen were dukes nobody would object to the dust," but it isn't easy to figure out how to produce such a happy arrangement. If all dustmen were dukes, they would find some new group, under another name, to handle the dust. Hence the question: in a society of equals, who will do the dirty work? And the necessary answer is that, at least in some partial and symbolic sense, we all should do it. Then we will have an end to dukes, if not yet to dustmen. This is what Gandhi was getting at when he required his followers, himself too, to clean the latrines of their ashram. Here was a symbolic way of purging Hindu society of untouchability. But it also made a practical point: peop should clean up their own dirt. Otherwise, the me and women who do it not only for themselves b for everyone else too will never be equal membe of the political community.

What is required, then, is a kind of domest *corvée*, not only in households, though it is esp cially important there, but also in communes, fa tories, offices, and schools. There would be less di to clean, probably, if everyone knew in advance making it that they couldn't leave the cleaning someone else.

But some people, patients in a hospital, for ex ample, can't help but leave it to someone else, an certain sorts of cleaning are best organized on large scale. Work of this sort might be done as pa of a national service program. Indeed, war an waste seem the ideal subjects of national service; th first because of the special risks involved, the secon because of the dishonor. Perhaps the work shoul be done by society's only legitimate proletariat—th proletariat of the young—not because they will enjo it, but because it isn't without educational valu Perhaps each citizen should take his turn regularl throughout life. But it is certainly appropriate tha the cleaning of city streets, say, or of national park should be the (part-time) work of the citizens.

It isn't necessary for all the hard work that need doing to be shared among all the citizens. Tha would require an extraordinary degree of state con trol over everyone's life. The idea is a partial an symbolic sharing, and the purpose is to break th link between hard work and disrespect.

In one sense, the break has already been sub stantially accomplished through a long process o cultural transformation that began with the earl modern attack on feudal hierarchy. Before God Puritan preachers taught, all human callings, a useful work, is equal. Today we are likely to ran

jobs as more or less desirable, not as more or less especially useful work can be or should be debasing. And yet we still impose on hard-working fellow citizens patterns of behavior, routines of distancing, that place them in a kind of pale: deferential movements, peremptory commands, refusals of recognition. When a garbage man feels stigmatized by the work he does, writes a contemporary sociologist, the stigma shows in his eyes. He enters "into collusion with us to avoid contaminating us with his lowly self." One way to break the collusion, and perhaps the best way, is to make sure that every citizen has working knowledge of the working days of his hardest working fellows. Once that is done, it is possible to consider other mechanisms, including market mechanisms, for organizing the hard work of society.

So long as there is a reserve army, a class of degraded men and women driven by their poverty and their impoverished sense of their own value, the market will never be effective. Under such conditions, the hardest work is also the lowest paid, even though nobody wants to do it. But given a certain level of communal provision and a certain level of self-valuation, the work won't be done unless it is very well paid indeed. The citizens will find that if they want to hire their fellows as scavengers and sweepers, the rates will be much higher than for more prestigious or pleasant work. This is a direct consequence of the fact that they are hiring *fellow* citizens.

VI. Scavengers and Sanitation Men

IF THE physical unpleasantness of some jobs can't be changed, sometimes their moral character can. The history of garbage collecting in the city of San Francisco offers a nice example of this sort of transformation.

For the past sixty years, more than half of the garbage of the city of San Francisco has been collected and disposed of by the Sunset Scavenger Company, a cooperative owned by its workers, the men who drive the trucks and carry the cans. In 1978, the sociologist Stewart Perry published a study of Sunset—a valuable speculation on "dirty work and the pride of ownership." The cooperative is democratically run, its officers elected from the ranks and paid no more than the other workers. They remain faithful to the program of the original organizers, "who intended to form and carry on a cooperative . . . where every member was a worker and actually engaged in the common work and where every member did his share of the work and expected every other member to work and do his utmost to increase the collective earnings." Indeed, earnings have increased more than those of manual workers generally; the company has grown; its elected officers have shown considerable entrepreneurial talent. Perry believes that the cooperative provides better than average service to the citizens of San Francisco and, what is more important here, better than average working conditions to its own members. That doesn't mean that the work is physically easier, but rather that cooperation has made it more pleasant—has even made it a source of pride.

The accident rate among Sunset members is significantly lower than the industry average. Garbage collecting is a dangerous activity. In the United States today, no other occupation has a higher risk of injury (though coal miners are subject to more serious injury). The reason is not clear. Garbage collecting is strenuous work, but not more so than many other jobs that turn out to have better safety records. Perry suggests that there may be a connection between safety and self-valuation. "The 'hidden injuries' of the status system may be linked to the apparent injuries that public health and safety experts can document." The first "accident" of garbage collecting is the internalization of disrespect, and then other accidents follow. Men who don't value themselves don't take proper care of themselves. This may be why Sunset's record is better.

Membership in the Sunset Scavenger Company is by vote of the current members. The founders of the company were Italian-Americans, and so are the bulk of the members today; about half of them are related to other members; a fair number of sons have followed their fathers into the business. They have made membership into a good thing, but don't distribute the good they have created in accordance with modern notions of "equal opportunity." In



Charles Gatewood

Dirty work: "perhaps it should be done by society's only legitimate proletariat—the proletariat of the young."



"The aim of political egalitarianism is a society free from domination. No more bowing and scraping, fawning and toadying." Here Bella, a fourteen-month-old chimp and star of the 1978 Cannes Film Festival, takes continental breakfast.

New York City, because of a powerful union, garbage collecting is also a widely desired job, but there the job has been turned into an office for which one must qualify. Would-be garbage collectors must take a civil service exam. It would be interesting to know something about the self-valuation of the men who pass the exam and are hired as public employees. They probably earn more than the members of the Sunset cooperative, but they don't own their jobs. And they don't share risks and opportunities; they don't manage their own company. The New Yorkers call themselves sanitation men, the San Franciscans scavengers. Who has the greater pride? If the advantage lies, as I think it does, with the members of Sunset, then it is closely connected to the character of Sunset: a company of companions, who choose their own fellows.

But unionization can be another form of self-management and another way of making the market work. There can't be any doubt that unions have been effective in winning better wages and working conditions for their members; sometimes they have even succeeded in breaking the link between income differentials and the status hierarchy. The New York garbage collectors are a prime example.

Perhaps the general rule should be that wherever work can't be unionized or run cooperatively, it should be shared by the citizens, not symbolically and partially, but generally. Indeed, when union or cooperative work is available to everyone (where there is no reserve army of the proletariat), other work just won't get done unless people do it for themselves. This is clearly the case with domestic cooking and cleaning, an area where jobs are increasingly filled by new immigrants, not by citizens. This is the sort of work that is largely dependent on its degraded moral character. Change the character and the work may well become undoable, not only from the perspective of the work but from that of the employer too. "When domestic servants are treated as human beings," wrote Shaw, "it is not worthwhile to keep them."

This is not true of garbage collectors or of coal miners, though the demand for human treatment will certainly make every kind of dirty and dangerous work more expensive than it was before. It is an interesting question whether it is true for soldiers. One can recruit soldiers through the labor market but in the absence of a desperate proletariat, the inducements would have to match or surpass those of other forms of hard work. Given the discipline necessary to military efficiency, however, unionization is difficult, self-management impossible. And that may well be the best argument for a conscript service. Conscription is a way of sharing the discipline and, perhaps more importantly, of bringing political controls to bear on its harshness. Soldiering has far more prestige than garbage collecting, but compared with a private in the army, the San Francisco scavengers and the New York sanitation workers look to me like free men.

VII. The Rectification of Names

What is most attractive in the experience of the Sunset company (as of the Israeli kibbutz) is the way in which hard work is connected to other activities—in this case, the meetings of the "stockholders," the debates over policy, the election of officers and new members. The company has also expanded into landfill and salvage operations, providing new and diversified employment (including managerial jobs) for some of the members, though all of them, whatever they do now, have spent years riding the trucks and carrying the cans. Throughout most of the economy, the division of labor has developed very differently, continually separating out rather than integrating the hardest sorts of work. This is especially true in the area of the human services, in the care we provide for the sick and the old. Much of that work is still done in the home, where it is connected with a range of other jobs, and its difficulties are relieved by the relationships it sustains. Increasingly, however, it is institutional work, and within the great caretaking institutions—hospitals,

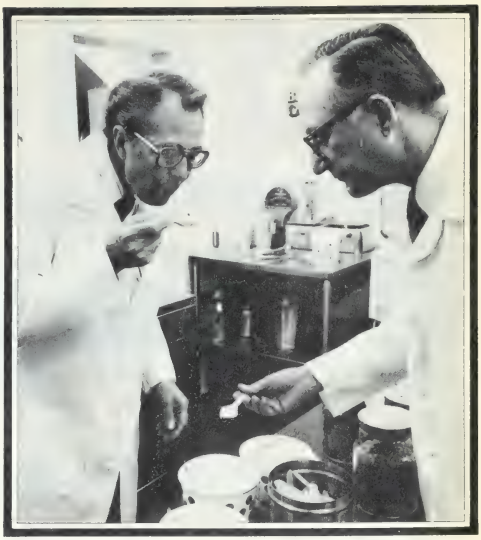
ental asylums, old age homes—the hardest work, e dirty work, the most intimate service and super- sion, is relegated to the most subordinate em- oyees. Doctors and nurses, defending their place the social hierarchy, shift it onto the shoulders of des, orderlies, and attendants—who do for strang- s, day in and day out, what we can only just con- ive of doing in emergencies for the people we love. W. H. Auden was clearly thinking of the patients, ot the hospital staff, when he wrote:

> *. . . the hospitals alone remind us*
> *of the equality of man.*

rderlies and attendants have to cope for long hours ith conditions that their institutional superiors see ly intermittently, and that the general public esn't see at all and doesn't want to see. Often ey look after men and women whom the rest of e world has given up on (and when the world ves up, it turns away). Underpaid and over- orked, at the bottom of the status system, they are evertheless the last comforters of humanity— ough I suspect that unless they have a calling for e work, they give as little comfort as they get.

If caretaking were shared, if young men and wom- n from different social backgrounds took their turns orderlies and attendants, the internal life of hos- tals, asylums, and old age homes would certainly e changed for the better. But such efforts will be pplementary at best. Most of the work will have be done by people who have chosen it as a career, nd the choice will not be easy to motivate in a so- ety of equal citizens. Already, we must recruit reigners to do a great deal of the hard and dirty ork of our caretaking institutions. If we wish to void that sort of recruitment, and the oppression it mmonly entails, we must, again, transform the ork. The sociologist Everett Hughes has written at perhaps " 'dirty work' can be more easily en- ured when it is part of a good role, a role that is ll of rewards to one's self. A nurse might do some ings with better grace than a person who is not llowed to call herself a nurse, but is dubbed 'sub- rofessional' or 'non-professional.' "

What is necessary is what the Chinese call "the ctification of names." In one sense, names are istorical and cultural givens; in another, they are bject to the play of social and political power. he process by which officeholders and profession- ls hold on to the title and prestige of their places hile shunting off their less agreeable duties is an ex- mple, perhaps the crucial example, of a power play. ob stratification in hospitals is denying the proud bel "nurse" to those who actually do the nursing —who (as the dictionary says) "wait upon and attend " the sick. I don't mean to make any claims about e essence of nursing; nor do I intend a purely nguistic argument. My point is that the hardness f the work ought to be connected to the glory, and e should never be too quick to allow their separa-



Ice-cream tasters.
Well, somebody's got to do it.

tion, even in the name of efficiency or technological advance.

No one wants or deserves society's lousy jobs. "To escape facing this fact," wrote Shaw, "we may plead that some people have such very queer tastes that it is almost impossible to mention an occupation that you will not find somebody with a craze for. . . . The saying that God never made a job but he made a man or woman to do it is true up to a certain point." But that plea doesn't take us very far. The truth is that hard work is unattractive work for most of the men and women who find themselves doing it. When they were growing up, they dreamed of doing something else. And as they age, the work gets more and more difficult.

We can share, and partially transform, hard work through some sort of national service; we can reward it with money or leisure; we can make it more rewarding by connecting it to other sorts of activities: political, managerial, and professional in character. We can conscript, rotate, cooperate, and compensate; we can reorganize the work and rectify its names. We can do all these things, but we will not have abolished hard work; nor will we have abolished the class of hard workers. All these proposals can achieve is a distribution of hard work that doesn't corrupt other distributive spheres in society: the sphere of money, the sphere of honor, the sphere of power. Society's worst jobs should not be the exclusive business of a pariah class, powerless, dishonored, underpaid. ■

Sygma

GUESTS AND HOSTS

Obeying the rules of hospitality can be excruciating if you are scrupulous about it.

BY LEWIS NORDAN

THE ONLY time I was in Preston, Arkansas, was in 1976. It was late spring, a day of intermittent sunshine and brief, steamy showers. There was no motel chain nearby—no familiar orange roof or Holiday Inn or Best Western or the cheery sunburst of a Quality Inn. There was only one ancient two-story hotel in the center of town. I don't know why this sleepy town had ever needed so elaborate a hotel, but there it was, with its tiled lobby and fireplace and carved woodwork and brass spittoons and shoeshine stand and elevator.

The place had fallen into a sad decay. The tiles were filthy, the elevator broken; the shoeshine stand stood unused and unsafe looking; the bellhop was unbelievably sleepy and aged. For reasons I'll try to explain, a depression flopped over my shoulders like a heavy, dusty bird on a too small roost.

It was not that I didn't like the persons who managed the hotel. The bellhop was no monkeylike caricature in a brass-buttoned suit and pillbox hat; he was a kindly gentleman in blue gabardine pants and a faded red smock. He was well-spoken and intelligent and not at all ashamed to have descended from (as I imagined him to have been) the owner of the hotel in its finer days to his present sleepy position in its service. The white-haired woman who took my money—three dollars the night—and gave me my key, and her sister, also white-haired and wearing a red waitress's uniform, who waited tables in the adjoining café, were equally likable and kind.

It was the specialness with which they treated me itself that caused my confusion. The moment he saw me the bellhop came to life. There were, apparently, a few steady customers of the hotel, traveling salesmen, but no one who approximated as closely as I did the image of a genuine "tourist." The bellhop fairly twittered around me with small talk. The sisters were no less aflutter at the sight of me. What had brought me to Preston, they wanted to know; would I be staying long, what was the weather like south of here, where would I be headed tomorrow? Briefly the key ring could not be found, a moment of keen embarrassment for the three of them, and when it was found, there was a short, whispered discussion, a little frantic, about which room might be "made up." When these details were settled and I was set to go to my room, I thought for a moment that all three of them together would usher me upstairs as a kind of delegation to ensure my comfort. At last the sisters honored the bellhop's prerogative and stood aside, their hands folded nervously at their waists, and we left them and headed up the stairs.

Already I knew that I could not stay the night.

HERE is the reason. Good manners at a Holiday Inn are one thing. You pay for and you receive the TV and the telephone and the air conditioning and the shag rug and the Gideon Bible. If the room is deficient in any way—if the Magic Fingers takes your quarter and won't vibrate, or won't stop vibrating, or if the heat lamp in the bathroom is burned out—you call the desk and tell whoever answers the phone and he gives you another room. No emotions over the complaint are exchanged.

In a person's home the situation is different. "Manners" then means a sealing of the ancient, sacred bond between guest and host. However humble the accommodations, they are a gift of the host to his guest, the best offering he has to make. Among civilized people this is always the assumption. To refuse those accommodations, or to notice their im-

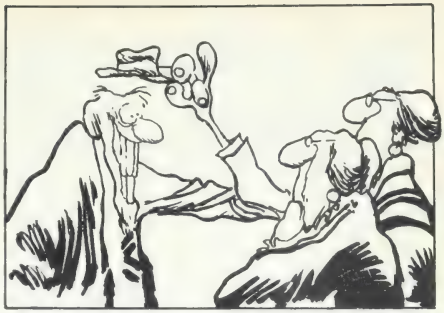
Lewis Nordan is working on a novel called Sugar Man.

erfection, is to violate that bond. When the host in-
ists that he is ashamed of the poverty of his gift, the
uest must disagree. The state of the lodgings is ir-
elevant. When the lodgings are poor, but neverthe-
ess a matter of pride to the host, the guest will
raise them highly and the host will make the de-
ials. These are truths known to all.

The problem in Preston, though, was that this was
hotel and not a home. And yet the manners that
pplied were those between guest and host rather
han between customer and innkeeper. The fact that
his is probably the good, old-fashioned way of run-
ing a family business is a matter for some other
ssay. I didn't care then about the triumph of the
ash nexus, and don't care now. What I cared about
vas that I was hopeless to disguise for long my dis-
ppointment at the feeble splendor of this hotel
ropped on its unsteady economic crutches. Com-
laining of the accommodations would have been
nonstrous, hiding my disappointment impossible; so
knew I had to leave.

The bellhop inserted the key and opened the door
o my room. With pride he directed me into it. He
howed me the bathroom, the clean towels; he turned
n the water to prove it was hot. He pushed his
and on the bed and made the springs creak and
ssured me of the high quality of the mattress. He
licked the bedside lamp on and off to show me it
vorked. He told me that if the room felt too warm,
he window could be raised to let in a cool breeze.
tipped him lavishly and he was gone.

The room was, in a manner of speaking, spotless.
But such a long time had passed since it had been
ut in this condition that an even topsoil of dust
ad settled upon everything. It lay on the plastic
hair and on the deal dresser and on the mirror and
n the bedspread and windowsill. I can't explain why
a host would concentrate on the perfection of cer-
tain details and overlook others such as this. I could

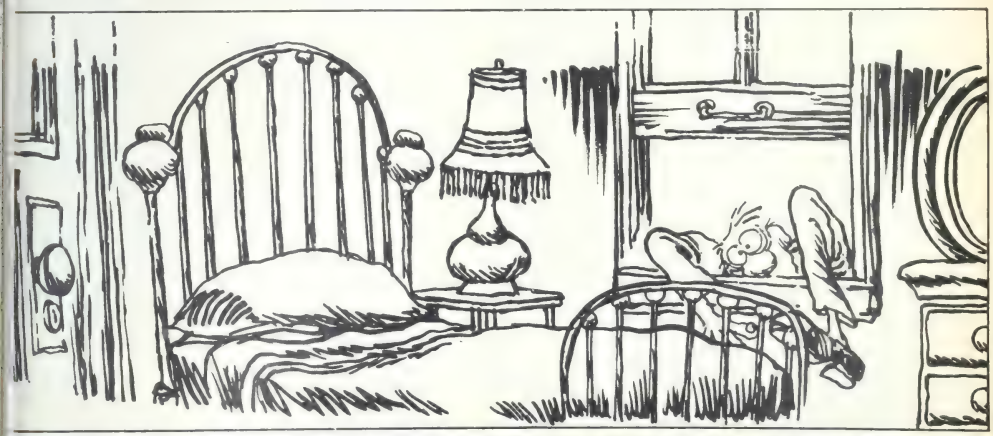


The sisters were aflutter.

think only of the fictional room in which Homer Barron met his end at the hands of Miss Emily Grierson in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," and the dread of splendid decay became all the more intolerable to me.

The window opened with ease, as the truthful bellhop had promised. I held my canvas bag out and dropped it into the alleyway below. I had no notion of ever coming back. I stooped and stepped out the window onto a line of jutting bricks that formed a ledge about twice the width of my foot. With difficulty I squatted and maneuvered myself until I could hang from this ledge by my fingertips. I dropped to the ground and felt sharp pains blaze through my feet and calves.

When I could stand again, it was a simple matter to slip around the edges of buildings and emerge from the shadows at some distance from the hotel. When I could return to my car without being seen, I drove to the edge of town and slept the night scrunched into the backseat.



The window opened with ease, as the truthful bellhop had promised.

NEXT morning I woke early. Something like despair overcame me as I tried in vain to drive away from Preston and the confusion of mannerly behavior I had found there. I stopped at a DX station and washed my mouth out with a Coke from the machine. It was typical of the exaggeration of my emotions that I thought the taste I was unable to wash out was that of betrayal, both of my hosts and of my past, of what I had learned from childhood about responsibility between guest and host. I have heard it said that this is a peculiarly Southern neurosis, but that is not true. There comes a time in every good person's life when he decides for all time whether he will know himself as one who values his comfort and convenience and good sense over a devotion to ferreting out and correcting all knowable minor infractions of the contract between guest and host. I had long since made my decision.

I drove back to the hotel. This time I approached the building from the rear. I eased my car down the alleyway and parked beneath the window from which I had jumped the night before. By standing on top of the car, I found sufficient handhold and foothold in the old bricks to pull myself, with effort, back onto the ledge and through the window again.

In the room I turned back the covers of the bed and rumpled the sheets. I squashed down the feather pillow with my hands. In the bathroom I stripped the wrapper off a new bar of soap, washed my face and hands, and threw the towel on the floor. I urinated and considered leaving the toilet unflushed, but could not go quite so far in leaving my mark. What kind of guest would fail to flush the toilet?

Everyone was happy to see me when I emerged. The sisters wanted to know whether I had slept well, whether the bed was all right, whether the water was hot enough, whether I might suggest improvements to make future guests more comfortable. I praised the accommodations. I commented on the excellence of the mattress, the heat of the water, the cool of the breeze that blew the night through my easily opened window.

The bellhop was there as well. He said, with morning gaiety, "I'll just run up and get your bag."

This was a problem. I didn't have a bag, of course. It was in my car. It was a mistake to have taken it with me the night before, but mannerly behavior is always more intuitive than well planned. I was so taken aback by the oversight that, for a moment, I could not speak. I stood before the three of them with my mouth open. The sisters' bright countenances darkened suddenly and horribly in the moment of my confusion. The fact that I had been found out seemed inescapable. I stammered, "I–I . . ."

The elder sister, out of her darkness, said to the bellhop, "Mr. Nordan did not have a bag."

The bellhop looked at her, into that hard darkness, and their eyes locked. After a second, he said, "Oh. That's right. I forgot about that."

Both sisters' faces lightened again, not so brig as before but bright enough. We said our good-bye we spoke of the weather and of roads and dire tions. We said another round of good-byes. I walke three blocks out of my way before backtracking t a different route to my car in the alley and drivir away from Preston, Arkansas, forever.

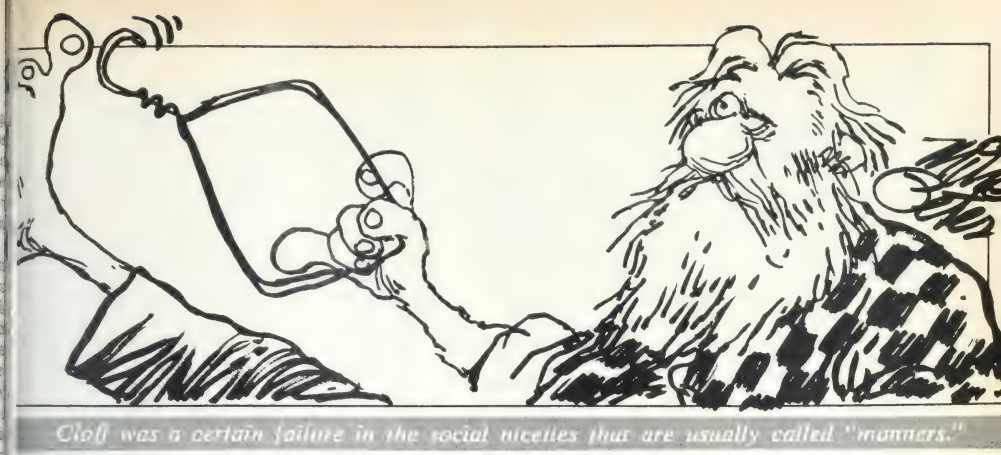
How much the sisters and the bellhop knew abo my night's lodging I never learned. I knew only th each of them was as cursed and as blessed by h devotion to the proper enactment of his role in th relationship as I was by mine. Persons who value th sanctity of the guest-host relationship will under stand this anecdote; others, perhaps, will not. N lie, no absurdity of conduct, no financial inequity i too great a sacrifice to one who would honor it. Th practical truth that forthrightness and honesty ar more courageous and, ultimately, less demeanin policies of conduct than dangerous leaps from sec ond-story windows is no argument against obser vance of the Code. Some persons are fated to pa it higher tribute than others, no doubt.

TOM CLOFF is a corpulent, handsome man o forty with blond stringy hair and a massiv beard, and his shoes are tied with balin wire. He is not a tramp exactly, but he hold no regular employment and lives in many states a once, traveling between several homes by his thuml and by his wits and by the anachronistic romance o the rails. (Once he nearly starved on a freezing rid coast to coast on hopped freights, and he says tha riding on top of a boxcar through a long tunnel i like living in an exhaust pipe.)

Cloff came to my house one January night wher the temperature was fifteen degrees below zero. H had hitchhiked from his mother's pig farm in north ern Kansas in a blizzard, and he called me, off a lis of phone numbers he had, to come get him at a caf several miles from my home. I drove to the caf and picked him up. This was the second time I had ever laid eyes on Cloff. Once I had worked as hi partner teaching poetry for two days in an elemen tary school. Those two days had prepared me fo much, but not for everything.

He had brought with him from Kansas, and had stashed in the shadows outside the café, his knap sack, a steamer trunk, an ancient heavy Underwood electric typewriter suspended from a bucket bail, a barrel of wheat, a Styrofoam freezer full of steaks, and a dead pig. All this I helped him load into my car and bring to my house that cold night. He stayed for nine months.

During those nine months in my home, Cloff would not flush the toilet—the one off his room. No matter how often I reminded him, no matter how I begged, no matter that the odor was staggering



Cloff was a certain failure in the social niceties that are usually called "manners."

and ubiquitous, he would not. For the entirety of his stay, he did not wash the pair of sheets that my wife had put on his bed his first night in our home. She suspected that he was not washing them, so she repeated her instructions on the operation of the washer and dryer. Still he did not. (In his absences I secretly flushed his toilet but held firm on the sheets. At the end of the nine months the sheets were burned.) He did not wash his dishes; he only scraped and wiped them, and after each meal for nine months stacked them in a greasy pile by the stove. He carried food to his room and left it there so long that it attracted a million tiny gnats, which infested the house. He brought a wire coat hanger with him to the table to scratch his athlete's foot while he ate. He stole the Sunday newspapers from our neighbors each week.

Cloff was a certain failure in the social niceties that are usually called "manners" but a champion in that more important area of conduct: the relationship between guest and host, however eccentrically he interpreted it.

While Cloff strove to fulfill his responsibilities as a proper guest, the results were, for me as his host, a great wealth of good feeling and warmth. I have never spent a more harmonious nine months in the company of another person. Cloff was gentle with my children; he was conscientious to make interesting and pleasant conversation; he observed, without prompting, a family's needs for privacy and for time alone in the house. He often washed our dishes (ours, not his); he cooked many meals for us and allowed none to be cooked for him. The newspapers that he stole were not for himself but for my family (no matter that we were embarrassed to death by the thefts), and he was scrupulous not to read them. His unwashed sheets and dishes and his unflushed toilet were a mad attempt to save me a few cents on the water bill, a debt I tried to absolve him of but without success. The food that spoiled in his room was taken there to avoid using space in our refrigerator. The wheat and the steaks and the pig were brought for us—for, that is, whichever host would receive him when it was time for him to stop traveling for a while. (I was not the first person he called that night; those higher on his list had not answered their phones.) With the foresight of one who relies on guesthood for survival, Cloff had slaughtered the pig and gutted it in Kansas on the farm and had gone to the considerable trouble and danger of hitchhiking hundreds of miles in a blizzard with it under his arm to make it a gift to the household that would eventually take him in. (I won't make too much of a paradox of this: the episode with the coat hanger might be admitted as an exception.) Still, Cloff's honoring of the guest-host relationship, no matter how eccentric his interpretation of it, no matter the inconvenience and exasperation it caused us at times, caused me and my family to love him, causes us to love him still, these several years later.

THERE are no predictable types of behavior that will ensure sealing of the weird, sacred, civilizing bond between guest and host. Energy and imagination are required to figure out what type of gift one partner in the relationship is prepared to give, and in what way the other is obliged and prepared to reciprocate. Candor, for example, is rarely a virtue. It would have been a serious failing in Preston (at least by my own perception of the case), and often with Cloff. And yet in some occasional cases, it might be all two persons have to secure the bond between them, however precariously.

I received an unexpected Christmas card from a college acquaintance, Talbot More, who, I was surprised to learn, was now an attorney in the Public Defender's office in Las Vegas. We had been close when we were younger, but I had not seen or corresponded with Talbot more than twice in twenty years, the last time at least ten years previously. We talked for a long time on the phone and ended by

making plans for me to come out to Las Vegas for a visit.

No interpretation of the role of host could have been more disquieting than Talbot's. It bordered, I thought, on madness.

There was no bed; we slept on the floor. There were no meals; what we ate, I bought, or he coerced friends to buy for us. There is more that I could tell about Talbot's failure to conform to the normal expectations a guest might have of his host, but that is not so important as the one concession he did make in his role.

This concession was candor, only that. He made it utterly, obsessively, unnecessarily, as if it were all he had and all he ever hoped to receive of anyone else.

I mistook my obligation at first and offered too little in return. Talbot would, as if it were an endlessly interesting topic of conversation, describe all my best qualities—my good marriage, my good children, my supposed generosity, my supposed successes in business, my supposed trim waistline, my self-discipline and regular work habits. I answered, "Thank you" and "Oh, not at all" and "You mustn't say so." In such mere politeness, I was failing as a guest.

Later he said, "I have an increasing bald spot on the back of my head." I could see no way to deny baldness, or any reason to, so I acknowledged the spot and felt uncomfortable. He told me he was thinking of getting a nose job. I said he didn't need one. (He does not; he is very handsome.) He said his ears were too small. I said they were not. He asked me to point out the suits in his closet that had gone out of style. I was beginning to catch on, but I was increasingly ill at ease. I told him I didn't own a suit, how would I know? He insisted, so I chose one. He said it had been his favorite suit until I chose it. Now he wanted to drop it at Goodwill. He told me the number of women with whom he had had sexual relations—he even showed me a written list of their names. I said that was a lot of women. He asked to see my own list. I pretended to have a list that I had left in Arkansas. I gave him a number, though, and as it was smaller than the number on his list, he was pleased, I thought. I knew he would have been more pleased with an honest answer, but I was not yet capable of the candor that was being asked of me. Talbot indicated the prostitutes on the list and said he had been young at the time and wanted to know whether I thought less of him for having slept with prostitutes. I said all young men should sleep with a prostitute, and wondered what my seventeen-year-old son was doing that night.

Talbot told me he was in debt. His marriage had fallen apart years earlier and his children were strangers to him. A love affair with a married woman had ended badly with a dangerous bit of gunplay. He wanted to be a writer but could not bring himself to write a word. He wanted to be a politician but was afraid political life would keep him from being a writer. He wanted to find the perfect woman. He suffered from migraines. He was terrified a madman would shoot him with a rifle from a highway overpass. Nothing he owned was any good. His phonograph was just out of the shop and it still wouldn't work. His VW Rabbit didn't get good gas mileage. He borrowed a hundred dollars from me to play poker, then lost it and said he felt guilty and thought he had lost my respect. I despaired of finding enough "polite" responses, and in my despair finally understood what I had to do.

When you can give a person nothing else to fill in the emptiness that he complains of in his life, you give him your secrets. I tried to do this for Talbot More. I admitted to him my fears of failure with my children, my excessive and secret drinking. I was in tears. I confessed to an area of conflict in my marriage, and told him that I had always felt unattractive because of my overbite. I told him I had felt ashamed of my father and had lived with guilt since his death. I described an act of betrayal and denial I had made against my son and twelve years of guilt I had not been free from since my mistake.

It didn't work. It was not enough. Even as I was unburdening myself, in the hope that if the failure of my life were made to seem large enough his would seem less so, he accused me of never revealing anything of myself to him. He said I only sat back and judged him and kept aloof. I said it was not true. I said I had gone out of my way to be candid and forthright with him, what more could I do, what more did he want to know. He wanted to know whether my wife enjoyed anal intercourse. He wanted to know whether she liked the taste of semen. He asked whether he didn't remember that in college she would rub it in her eyes. He tried to make me admit to a homosexual act with my college roommate.

I said, "Talbot, you must not ask me such things, such offensive things." He apologized, then wanted to compare penis size, flaccid and erect.

Talbot More was a failure as a host, but not an utter failure. There was nothing evil in his failure. From his bizarre viewpoint, the world suffered from a famine of candor. His duty as my host, he believed, was to feed me on his plentiful store of it, and my responsibility was to make a gift of my own candor to him, as much of it as I could bring with me from Arkansas to Nevada, just as Cloff had, against all probability, transported and presented to me the frozen pig and the wheat and the rest. Good manners—if we mean by manners a conscientious observance of the guest-host relationship—require extraordinary and manifold adjustments in behavior, according to the degree of unconventionality of one of the participants. The more conventional partner in the relationship—and this is a shifting role—must do most of the adaptation. There is nothing easy or fair about the requirements of the Code, but when we fulfill them, we glimpse our best selves. ■

TIDINGS OF Comfort & Joy

Anarchist poet, eminent gerontologist, novelist, political thinker, sex guru:

Alex Comfort, twentieth-century hero.

IN THE LOBBY of the Biltmore, an ersatz hacienda of a hotel in the lush California town of Santa Barbara, I was on the lookout for a man wearing a jumpsuit, smoking a cigar, with shoulder-length hair and no fingers on his left hand. My quarry was Dr. Alex Comfort, author of the world's two largest-selling sex manuals. Comfort is the man who brought sex manuals out of the bottoms of dresser drawers and put them on the tops of coffee tables. He also has published thirty-four other books, including seven novels and a variety of scientific texts, and has had a distinguished career as a physician and researcher in biology. Yet very little is known about him.

Comfort's entry in *Who's Who* reveals that he is British, and has lived in the United States only since 1974. One of the very few more spacious published descriptions of Comfort is contained in Gay Talese's 1980 book *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, a long, rambling account of America's new "sexual freedom." As part of his exhausting research into the subject, Talese spent time at Sandstone, a "love retreat" near Los Angeles devoted to experiments in open sexuality. "Often the nude biologist, Dr. Alex Comfort, brandishing a cigar," Talese wrote, "traipsed through the room between the prone bodies with the professional air of a lepidopterist strolling through the fields waving a butterfly net, or an ornithologist tracking along the surf a rare species of tern. A gray-haired bespectacled owlish man with a well-preserved body, Dr. Comfort was unabashedly drawn to the sight of sexually engaged couples and their concomitant cooing, considering such to be enchanting and endlessly instructive; and with the least amount of encouragement—after he had deposited his cigar in a safe place—he would join a friendly clutch of bodies and contribute to the merriment. . . . He was a rarity in the medical profession, one who brought a bedside manner to an orgy." ("A dreadful book," Comfort said when I called to set up our meeting at the Biltmore, "written by a dreadful man." But he denied nothing.)

In a 1974 newspaper profile, Comfort was described as always wearing jumpsuits—"Take three jumpsuits," he was quoted as advising; "you needn't wash shirts"—and smoking cigars. A photograph showed a smiling man with a Ben Franklin hairdo standing with a woman described as his wife, Ruth. Since *Who's Who* indicates that at the time he was married to someone named Jane, this was also mysterious.

And that was the file on Alex Comfort. My only other clue for recognizing him was that I knew he was missing the fingers on his left hand as the result of an explosion.

P. J. Corkery is a Los Angeles writer. His last article in Harper's *was "For Immediate Release" (March 1982), about life in a public relations firm.*

BY P. J. CORKERY

WHILE I was waiting in the Biltmore lobby, a stuffy wedding party wandered in, decked out in madras and cotton. The bridal couple looked as if they could have used a little of Dr. Comfort's medicine. The rest of the group, which included in-laws, and a couple of aging, slightly out-of-the-picture grandparents in wool and chiffon who promptly collapsed onto a sofa, looked none too festive. But the zesty Comforts were not to be seen. I strolled the lobby and checked out the bar, the dining room, and a patio without success. By now the wedding party had departed the lobby, leaving only the grandparents behind. As I looked at them on the couch—a small man of about five foot seven, smoking a pipe and wearing a wool suit, a white shirt, and a club tie; and a small, smiling woman with a pageboy hairdo and a gray chiffon cocktail dress—I was shocked. The grandmother was speaking in a clipped British accent, and the natty grandfather had . . . no fingers on his left hand. These staid citizens were the sex revolutionaries, Dr. and Mrs. Alex Comfort.

I went over and introduced myself.

"You were expecting something different," said Mrs. Comfort, who also said her name was Jane, not Ruth, and who was not the woman in the magazine picture anyway. "What were you expecting?"

"Longer hair, jumpsuits, cigars," I muttered, half to the floor.

"Oh, the long hair is long gone," said Comfort. "I grew that for the bicentenary. I cut it short now."

But then, as if to compensate for my collapsed expectations, Mrs. Comfort pulled some cigars out of her purse and offered me one.

"As for my suit and tie," said Comfort, "well, the tie is the Royal College of Surgeons tie. I'm the only one in Santa Barbara with one. Indeed, this is the real me," he said, waving his pipe-laden right hand over his heavy wool suit,"This *is* the real me—more or less."

Comfort was going to acquaint me with the rest of his real self, so we went to a patio for conversation over lunch. "We'd like coffee to start," Alex told the bar waitress.

"It took us some time to get used to starting the meal with coffee," said Jane, "but we've become Americanized. Coffee is the perfect pick-me-up when one is tired, I find."

ALEX COMFORT is a Londoner, born in 1920 to a middle-class family. His father, Alexander Charles Comfort, was a civil servant who worked as an administrator in the London school system. His mother, Daisy Fenner Comfort, was "a brilliant academic," Alex says with characteristic British understatement.

"My parents were very strong on learning," Comfort says, "but in general their social attitudes, certainly their sexual attitudes, were middle-of-the-road. Politically they had a bias toward British socialism."

As a schoolboy, Comfort was not sent to one of the famous English establishment schools such as Harrow or Eton, but was taught instead at the intellectually rigorous Highgate School in London. Highgate, where T. S. Eliot once taught, grounded its students heavily in the classics and gave them an exposure to the basic sciences. Like many people who learned Latin and Greek by rote and recitation, Comfort developed a remarkable memory. His conversation today is chockablock with sudden declamations of long passages from everything from the *Aeneid* to *Don Juan* to folksongs.

Comfort was attracted early on to the "scientific method" of approaching natural phenomena through laboratory experimentation, observation, deduction, and reexperimentation. And it was while experimenting with gunpowder in a lab at age fourteen that he blew off the fingers of his left hand. "That explosion brought some things home to me," he says. Among the things he found himself thinking about was his own mortality. This quickly translated to a more academic interest in death and the aging of organisms. But the explosion did not diminish his interest in gadgets and experiments.

The good scholar Comfort was admitted, after Highgate, to Trinity College at Cambridge University on a merit scholarship. Before heading to Trinity, a nursery for skeptics and scientists (Isaac Newton is among the alumni), Comfort showed an interest in writing. At age sixteen, he and his father sailed to South America and Africa on tramp freighters. From this voyage, Comfort wrote *The Silver River*, a diary of the trip published in 1938. *The Silver River* is no Fodor's guide. Written in the tradition of both Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle* and Evelyn Waugh's and Graham Greene's acidic travel writing, *The Silver River* is the sociological, political, zoological, and botanical journal of a bright gadfly. In one section, describing a Buenos Aires slum, young Alex writes: "[S]uch abject poverty and such wasteful and rampant vice have never been permitted throughout history to continue without bringing their due reward to the authors of the condition. That reward is coming to Buenos Aires to a corrupt officialdom and a cynical and inhuman party of speculators. I have seen it on the way." Comfort's certainty at age sixteen that society would inevitably correct itself soon disappeared from his beliefs. His belief, soon to arrive along with World War II, that all governments were oppressive would, in a nutty way, lead him later to write *The Joy of Sex*.

COMFORT'S precocious faculty for telling the world exactly what he thinks about any topic was nurtured at Cambridge, where education, even in the sciences, required the student to write and defend a paper every week criti-

izing the previous week's assigned reading. Debate at Cambridge, as at Oxford, was a daily business, and Comfort leapt into it, taking sides on issues from poetry to politics. Cambridge is also where Comfort became engaged to his first wife, Ruth, and met his second and present wife, Jane, whom he married in 1973. He has an adult son, Nick, who is a political correspondent for a conservative London newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*.

The hundreds of pamphlets and articles that appeared on all aspects of political and moral questions on the eve of World War II (many of which Comfort seems to have written) give the lie to one of the greatest triumphs of British propaganda: that the nation was unanimously behind the war effort. In his memoirs, Churchill stated the official line about the national mood: "In that dark, terrific, and also glorious hour, we received from all parts of His Majesty's Dominions from the greatest to the smallest . . . the assurance that we would all go down or come through together." King George VI, in his royal diary, mused that Hitler must realize that he goes to war "with the whole might of the British Empire against him." But there were also those who refused. At the start of the war, Comfort, while still at Cambridge, declared himself to be a noncombatant.

The view he had as a schoolboy that a cleansing revolution would come to clean out the evil in civilized society had been replaced by a more pessimistic one, which informed his decision to be a noncombatant (a "conscientious objector" in American), and which would affect his later views. In his first novel, *No Such Liberty* (1941), Comfort set forth his ideas. *No Such Liberty* is the story of a young German scientist who flees political persecution from one war-torn European country to the next at huge risk, until he lands in Britain. There he is presumably protected by that nation's traditions of liberty and justice. But because of his German nationality and pacifist beliefs, the British war government imprisons him in a camp for troublesome aliens. Finally, he manages to make his way from this camp to America. But as he travels to America, he is terrified that the war fever, which has destroyed fair play even in England, will reach America, and he will be in the same horrid position. *No Such Liberty* argues, in other words, that the battle against the tortures of fascism brutalized the societies engaged in the battle, so that in the end they were no different from the fascist societies they were warring against.

Comfort, a minor character on the London literary scene, denounced the war and was banned from the BBC's airwaves. He was no longer allowed to participate in poetry readings and talk shows. Known then primarily as a poet, he began to attack other poets "whose line is briefly a demand that the young poets should become the literary propagandists of the war, devote themselves to the study of [Rupert] Brooke, and write choric odes to the Air Force. . . ."



Dr. Alex Comfort wearing the only Royal College of Surgeons tie in Santa Barbara.

In 1943 Comfort published, under the pseudonym Obadiah Hornbrooke, a long poem attacking those writers who were participating in the war effort. Addressed to a mythical American visitor, the poem declared, in part:

> *You met them all. You don't require a list*
> *Of understrapping ghosts who once were writers—*
> *Who celebrate the size of Britain's fist,*
> *Write notes for sermons, dish out pep to mitres,*
> *Fake letters from the Men who Fly our Fighters.*
> *Cheer when we blast some enemy bungalows—*
> *Think up atrocities, the artful blighters,*
> *To keep the grindstone at the public's nose—*
> *Combining moral uplift and pornography,*
> *Produced with arty paper and typography.*

This went on for fifteen stanzas written in Byronic *ottava rima*, a verse form used by Lord Byron for *Don Juan*, his incredibly long screed against repression and hypocrisy. Few noticed that allusion, and not too many Britons even noticed the poem, which was printed in a small literary and political magazine. But George Orwell did. And Comfort's stance was too much for Orwell, who wrote his own fourteen-stanza hate poem back. Comfort apparently had touched a raw nerve (possibly because Orwell's views had been quite similar until they shifted dramatically at the outbreak of the war). Orwell said, in part:

> *I'm not a fan for "fighting on the beaches,"*
> *And still less for the "breezy uplands" stuff,*
> *I seldom listen-in to Churchill's speeches,*

Elson-Alexandre

But I'd far sooner hear that kind of guff
Than your remark, a year or so ago,
That if the Nazis came you'd knuckle under
And peaceably "accept the status quo."
Maybe you would! But I've a right to wonder
Which will sound better in the days to come,
"Blood, toil and sweat" or "Kiss the Nazi's bum."

Comfort had, in fact, once indicated he hoped for a Nazi victory—in a 1942 letter to *Horizon* magazine. He wrote:

As far as I can see, no therapy short of complete military defeat has any chance of re-establishing the common stability of literature and of the man in the street. One can imagine [that] *the greater* [the] *adversity the greater the sudden realisation of a stream of imaginative work, and the greater the sudden katharsis of poetry, from the isolated interpretation of war as calamity to the realisation of the imaginative and actual tragedy of Man. When we have access again to the literature of the war years in France, Poland and Czechoslovakia, I am confident that that is what we shall find.*

It was a foolish, attention-getting stance. The only thing to be said in its favor is that it was essentially meaningless. The fact that the British antiwar movement was a pillow fight without any real consequences, even for the social relations of its participants, is revealed in an astonishing letter Orwell wrote to Comfort after the exchange of vitriolic poems. "Dear Comfort," Orwell wrote, "Very many thanks for sending me the copy of *New Road* [an anthology coedited by Comfort]. I am afraid I was rather rude to you in our *Tribune* set-to, but you yourself weren't altogether polite to certain people. I was only making a political and perhaps moral reply, and as a piece of verse your contribution was immensely better, a thing most of the people who spoke to me about it hadn't noticed. I think no one noticed that your stanzas had the same rhyme going right the way through. . . ."

Comfort himself today dismisses the entire episode as "a flyting—a mock quarrel between two people who actually feel quite cordially towards one another." In other words, it was all in good fun. But Comfort does stand by his notion that the fight against fascism brutalized the warriors, and the only pure souls were pacifists.

MEANWHILE, Comfort was developing an interest in medicine. Encouraged, apparently, by a colleague who told him that his fingerless left hand, with its now overdeveloped thumb, formed a natural obstetrical tool, he took up the study of obstetrics at the Rotunda, a Dublin hospital financed by the receipts from a stage and movie theater on its grounds. "Because of the evacuation of London, due to the bombings, London obstetrical hospitals were empty," Comfort recalls, "so I went to Dublin where I also became interested in Irish poetry, an influence that was to stay with me."

Before leaving, he made one more attempt to bust out of the teapot-sized world of the poets and pamphleteers and to affect the general population, with a novel called *The Powerhouse*. *The Powerhouse* is full of complicated symbolism dealing with the fate of a group of European workers during the war (yes, some work in a powerhouse). Its protagonists are victims: victimized by society, which is insensitive, oppressive, and generally pathological. Constantly oppressed and depressed, the characters in *The Powerhouse*, depending on their stamina, seem to become either anarchists or sexual impotents.

The Powerhouse, says Comfort, "was a novel with a very big canvas. I'd always tried to emulate the type of novel that Zola and Tolstoy wrote: one in which there were great events in which there was always somebody present as a fly on the wall." *The Powerhouse* was the only one of Comfort's novels to achieve a moderate sale, but it was no best seller.

Of his career as a novelist, Comfort says, "my novels enjoyed a considerable succès d'estime. They are prestigious, but prestigious books butter no parsnips." He wrote two more after *The Powerhouse*, *On This Side Nothing* in 1949, and *A Giant's Strength* in 1952, and then decided to stop. Comfort's novels could be described as novels of ideas, but they certainly don't qualify as realistic fiction. Indeed the impulse behind them doesn't seem to be to narrate a story. They are chatty image- and symbol-laden volumes that reveal Comfort working out his own notions of the effects of faceless society on the dignity of individuals. And whatever their succès d'estime, they didn't have much impact.

More impressive than the novels themselves is the fact that Comfort found time to write them. In the late 1940s he began to teach physiology and biology. Medicine and science gave Comfort a new career after the war and a new stance with which to face society—one considerably more respectable than that of a young, Byronesque poet (and a lot less likely to produce such beyond-the-pale postures as hoping for a Nazi victory as a way of advancing literature). Comfort's entry in *Who's Who* shows him at various times in the 1950s, as "lecturer in physiology at London Hospital Medical College, researcher on the pigments of mollusk shells, research associate in zoology at University College London, Nuffield Research fellow in the biology of senescence at University College London and recipient of the Ciba Foundation Prize for research on aging in human beings." His writings in that decade include "Sexual Behavior in Society," "Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State," "The Biology of Senescence," and books of essays on scientific and social topics. Though his interests remained catholic, Comfort became most prominent for his work in gerontology.



"The nude biologist . . . brandishing a cigar, traipsed through the room between the prone bodies."

Comfort's many publications of this period also include a collection of folk songs entitled *Are You Sitting Comfortably?* It was the heyday of his nuclear disarmament phase, and folk music was the court music of that movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s. One song, a collaboration between Comfort and Pete Seeger, became fairly well known. It's called "One Man's Hands." One verse and chorus go as follows:

One man's hands can't break a prison down,
One man's hands can't break a prison down,
But if two and two and fifty make a million,
We'll see that day come round,
*We'll see that day come round.**

Other verses follow the same idea and call for many hands to ban the bomb, break the color bar, make the union roll, and so on. Among his other talents (and one he demonstrated for me), Comfort can whistle for dancing, a folk art that requires the performer to whistle while inhaling as well as while exhaling.

With his return to respectability, Comfort was once again invited to return to the airwaves of the BBC, where the British population, Comfort says, got to know him as an "anarchist-pacifist philosopher." He was now a respectable, almost licensed, gadfly with an honorable scientific record. But in 1956, when the British government, in a parody of its old imperial verve, decided to invade Egypt to recapture the Suez Canal, Comfort turned subversive again. Public opinion about the Suez adventure was divided, unlike that during the world war. And when the BBC banned Comfort again for attempting to yell "Stop Suez" in the middle of a show, there was no angry Orwell, representing responsible Left opinion, to chastise him. But the BBC couldn't stop him. Comfort constructed a portable radio transmitter that allowed him to break into airwaves and interrupt the evening news with lines like "Stop Suez." Neither the BBC nor the police were ever able to locate it. For the record, it was in a van that Comfort parked outside the House of Commons. He managed to perform a similar stunt in 1962 while actually in jail (along with Bertrand Russell and other notables) for ban-the-bomb protest activities, when he interrupted the BBC Sunday religious service with antinuclear slogans.

THOUGH COMFORT'S ruling passions change radically from year to year, the obsession with gadgets that cost him his fingers and later got him illegally on the airwaves has never left him, as I discovered when I followed the Comforts home from our lunch at the Biltmore. They live in Montecito, a beautiful town of homes and small farms in the mountains above Santa Barbara, about five miles in and up from the beach. It's also the home of another quiet hotel—the Montecito Inn, which was built as a retreat from Hollywood by Charlie Chaplin and Fatty Arbuckle. The song "There's a Small Hotel" was written about the Montecito Inn, and the whole village has a quiet, romantic air about it. Genial isn't the word for

* © 1962 by Fall River Music.

David Johnson

Montecito, but neither is snobbish. "It's the perfect place," as Alex says, "to bring a bird."

The Comforts own a sprawling white house with a large garage. They bought it nine years ago for $81,000. It's now valued at about $350,000, Jane said. The Comforts, like every other householder in California, are obsessed with falling house prices. But as they said, prices in Montecito are likely to remain good, at least for potential sellers. As we pulled up to the driveway, Jane said, "Now be set for it, because our alarm will sound once we enter the gahridge." As we got close, the door opened on a signal from Alex, revealing a small Honda and a space for the Ford Torino. We were in. As the car entered the garage, a searing siren blast went off. As we drove in and parked, Alex leapt out to a switch and turned off the noise.

"Alex is very mechanical," Jane said, as she and I got out of the car. "He built that alarm and others that we have here. Some of them are quite frightening."

"What do you think of that?" Alex said, coming back to me—meaning, I guess, the alarm.

"Very loud and very scary," I said. "Have you had a problem with break-ins?"

"Oh, not too much," said the former anarchist. "We have had intruders, but now we are connected with the sheriff and the police and have fitted all the entryways with alarms and devices."

"Is it because of those intruders that you have all this stuff?" I asked, sensing that a brush with American crime might have driven this pacifist to stringing the place with wiring and sirens and bells.

"No, I merely like to keep the grounds secure," he said. "I always have. In London at our home we had a tobacco box outside the house. The box we painted red and put an electric bulb inside so that the whole box would shine. On the box I painted the word ALARM. Next to it was a switch, a big electric switch with two words painted by it: OFF and ON. Of course, the switch was turned to ON."

Here Alex began to laugh. "The idea," he continued, "was that if you tried to turn the switch to OFF you'd get a hell of a jolt because I had the switch hooked up to an X-ray machine transformer inside."

"You could get sent up for that over here," I said to a man who clearly believes a man's home is his castle.

"Yes, I know," he said. "I took it down because I was afraid the police or the fire brigade might touch it. It wouldn't actually hurt you, but you would get a jolt."

Then Alex took me around the grounds and showed me alarms rigged at all the windows and doors. He had constructed the system in his garage electrical shop out of old tins and up-to-the-minute technology. Furthermore, he has other deterrence devices controlled from various other parts of the house. If an alarm goes off, people in the castle can activate more devices to deter, disorient, defeat and disable intruders. Some of these involve . . . but then, I promised not to tell.

In 1961, Comfort changed his mind again about novel writing and published *Come Out to Play*, which expresses a growing friskiness in his thinking. Once again, though, his novel was not a success. "The only people who liked it were psychiatrists and biologists," he says. "It was too foggy for everyone else."

Come Out to Play is a departure for Comfort. It is a comic work about an eccentric scientist not unlike Comfort himself. The hero and narrator is Dr. George Goggins, a man in a jam. "Stranded in Paris without a paying job," Comfort writes of Goggins in the book's preface, "he has only three assets—a sound practical and theoretical knowledge of human mating habits, the capacity to sell 'boots to fish,' and Dulcinea [a consort]. Dulcinea is beautiful (of course) and it occurs to Goggins that if he and she can please each other with such virtuosity, they can teach other people to do likewise." He proceeds to do exactly that, and shortly afterward " 'togetherness' sweeps the Top People. . . . The Press is flannelled. . . . In the thick of the uproar is the genially insufferable Goggins, dealing out Sanskrit, Freud, chemistry, information, love and codology in all directions."

Goggins sets up a sex clinic. "We would give people," he says, "their first real experience of pleasure and see if it helped them or civilized them at all. I expect that half the benefit would come, not from any techniques we could teach them, but simply from the sense of permission implied in being taught."

In his restiveness and in his determination to make a splash with the general public, and in his sense that good sex may be the one thing that can civilize society, Goggins is akin to Comfort. But it wasn't until 1962 that Comfort began to get a sense of how he might become as uproarious and influential as his fictional creature.

In the late 1950s, Comfort, in need of some general philosophical recharging, was working at University College London with J. B. S. Haldane, the biologist and social philosopher. Haldane encouraged an Indian philosopher and scientist friend to invite Comfort to his research center on the subcontinent. "Officially I was there to measure mollusks," says Comfort, "but the visit gave me an exposure to Indian philosophy and thought that's had a profound influence on my work ever since." To become closer to Indian philosophy, Comfort set out to learn Sanskrit. Naturally his way of learning involved writing. Comfort began to teach himself Sanskrit by translating, with the aid of a pony, a Sanskrit sex manual, the Koka Shastra.

"I did this translation," says Comfort, "and I couldn't help but think this was a terribly square

ex manual. It was written by ancient celibates who earned the material by rote. Full of classifications of thousands of different kinds of kisses and positions, it nonetheless didn't have much to do with actual human behavior.

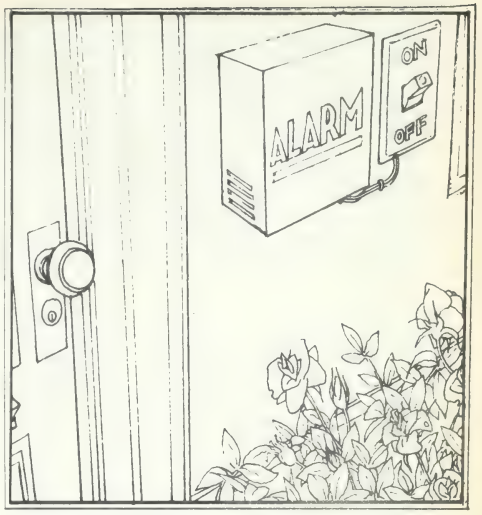
"But yet I was thinking the idea of a really good helpful sex manual was a great one. There certainly was a need for one in English. I began at the time to think of doing one as a textbook for medical students. Indeed, I started to do a heavy book, a textbook. But it really wasn't working. For years it sat in a safe in a wall. The idea marinated and became mixed in with those notions of civilizing people and with making a splash à la Dr. George Goggins.

"I decided what we really needed was a sex book that the public would read. A sense of playfulness, I decided, was what people needed about sex. I believed that good sex is radicalizing, really radicalizing of people in the middle of the population, people who wouldn't think of themselves as candidates for radicalization.

"If you have a good sex life, you're going to want to continue to have the leisure and nice circumstances in which to enjoy it. If you've got a good sex life, you're not going to be so full of aggression that you're going to want to join an army and fight some strangers.

"I wanted to do a book that would say to people, 'Look, if you play flagellation games and are excited by them, you bother no one, provided you don't turn off a partner who finds the scene frightening.' Because I believe that if you handle those aggressions in the bedroom, you're not so likely to enact similar aggressions outside the bedroom. People who deal with their aggressions outside the bedroom are apt to end up at My Lai or Belsen or the Falkland Islands.

"So I sat down with Jane to write a sex book that people would read. But I really had no firm expectation that it would ever be printed."



If you tried to turn the switch to OFF *you'd get a hell of a jolt.*

FOR REASONS partly legal and partly cultural, most previous efforts at purveying sexual instruction had masqueraded as other forms of literature, such as medical texts (*Dr. Bernard McHygienic's Color Photographic Guide to Modern Conjugal Health*) or art books (*Prof. E. A. Lipsmacker's Watercolor Atlas of Marriage Customs Since 1500 as recorded by Europe's Most Celebrated Primitives*) or literature from other climes (*The Karl and Ella Von Talisman Bongo Foundation Translation of "Thy Illustrated Neighbor's Perfumed Garden,"* $22.50 with e-z-wipe plastic cover). So Comfort really didn't hope for too much success with a straightforward sex manual.

But *The Joy of Sex*, published in 1972, turned out to be the right book for a new age, and Comfort, instead of finding the book suppressed, found himself being hailed as a star. *The Joy of Sex* became an immediate best seller. And Comfort was, at long last, where he wanted to be: in the thick of things. From castigating poets who had participated in Britain's war efforts, through years of natural history, through years of teaching biology, through years of being a "pacifist-anarchist philosopher" who distrusted all governments and regarded civilization as psychopathological, through years of being taken seriously only by other members of the British Left, Comfort had landed squarely in the Aquarian Revolution. The only problem now was that he couldn't get his hands on the money.

"At the time, I was coming to the United States quite a bit to do gerontological research (the study of aging), which is better here than it is in Britain, and wasn't thinking very hard about *The Joy of Sex*, at least as a publishing enterprise. I didn't think it would ever go, so I didn't pay too much attention to the contracts. The publisher got most of the money, and the money I received I had to keep in the United Kingdom, subject to heavy taxation. I wasn't really free to enjoy it."

At this point in 1973, *The Joy of Sex* had sold almost 2 million copies in Europe and the United States. Comfort's royalties, locked up though they might have been because of currency and tax restrictions, were estimated by one source at $900,000 annually. Comfort may no longer have been a social prophet without honor, but he remained a prophet without profit.

He put some lawyers on the case and they found a loophole. If Comfort were to assign some of his

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royalties to an educational or eleemosynary foundation in the United States, he'd be able personally to get at the bulk of his locked-up money.

"Somebody," says Comfort, "put me in touch with a place called the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, in Santa Barbara. It was supposed to be a kind of think tank and was well presented to me. They were willing to make a deal. I assigned 20 percent of my own royalties to them, and was able to get at some of the money. In addition, I got to live in the United States—I was coming here ten or twelve times a year anyway in connection with my medical research, and I'd just as soon live here for a while."

THE CENTER for the Study of Democratic Institutions, now defunct, was founded in 1954 by the remarkable Robert Maynard Hutchins, the famous educator who became president of the University of Chicago in 1929 at age thirty. A sort of P. T. Barnum-turned-superintendent of education, Hutchins initiated a variety of wacky high-minded projects during his lifetime, such as the famous *Syntopicon*, a one-volume index of "The 102 Great Ideas of Western Man," cross-referenced to companion volumes containing the writings of Plato, Freud, and so on.* With a $4 million gift, indirectly from the Ford Foundation, Hutchins, along with a few cronies including his son-in-law Rexford Tugwell, a former FDR speechwriter, set off in 1959 to buy an estate in Santa Barbara and set up as a "true intellectual community."

The center functioned by inviting scholars, each one already society-certified as the close personal friend of some major idea, up to the center for a spell. Each fellow, as these folk were called, was given a salary—based on top scale at top universities—and an office. In return each fellow was allowed to continue his research but was expected to meet daily at the center's conference room and participate in a discussion of whatever the center was thinking about that day—Weak Spots in the Constitution; the New City; the Place of Poetry in a Free Society; things like that.

But fine words butter no parsnips, as Alex Comfort says. A way needed to be found to pay the upkeep. This included keeping the domestic appurtenances of the personal retreat of the senior Plato present, Hutchins, stylishly *bijou*.

So for a fee, pigeons, usually from freeway-close Beverly Hills, were invited up to the center to participate in these daily conferences devoted to "clarifying the basic issues," as the center liked to call them. The visitors would spend a day or so getting up close and personal to the big thinkers and the big thoughts, leaving a big check behind. Joan Didion captured the spirit of the center (before Comfort was involved), in an essay included in her book *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. "Don't make the mistake of taking a chair at the big table," she was told. "The talk there is pretty high-powered."

> *"Is there any evidence that living in a violent age encourages violence?" someone was asking at the big table.*
> *"That's hard to measure."*
> *"I think it's the Westerns on television."*
> *"I tend* (pause) *to agree."*

Then later, Paul Newman, "in the role of concerned citizen," is on hand to discuss "The University in America" with Dr. Hutchins, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Arnold Grant, Rosemary Park, and another concerned citizen, Jack Lemmon.

> *"Apropos of absolutely nothing," Mr. Lemmon says, pulling on a pipe, "just for my own amazement—I don't* know, *but I* want *to know—"*

You get the idea. Discourse at the center was clearly on a very high plane, and such an institution was only too willing to help Alex Comfort with his royalty problem on *The Joy of Sex*.

Accepting a fellowship at the center, the Comforts moved to Santa Barbara. Here he continued his research into aging, enjoyed his new celebrity as the Brillat-Savarin of sex in the age of gourmet living, and published *More Joy of Sex*, a sequel that also did well, and whose royalties he managed to keep. But one day in May 1975, at about the time that he was demonstrating his bedside manner to Gay Talese and others at Sandstone down near Los Angeles, Comfort learned something astonishing. Once again he learned that society's institutions cannot be trusted.

On May 11, 1975, the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions announced that it was firing everybody, including resident scholars. Everybody, that is, except for Comfort. Furthermore, the center was leaving bosky Santa Barbara and was moving to chilly Chicago, Hutchins's home base. Fund-raising efforts at the center had fallen off so badly that it was losing $30,000 a month. Hutchins decided to jettison most of the program and keep just Comfort on.

"They were trying to rip off my money," Comfort says. And it was true, center spokesmen revealed at the time, that the royalties from Comfort's book were a major source of funding. "If Comfort's financial support was withdrawn," a spokesman said, "the center would collapse."

Comfort sued to get his money back. The center countersued, alleging that the sequel, *More Joy*, was written solely to frustrate the economic well-being of the center by diverting sales from the original *Joy of Sex*. By 1976, the center had collapsed com-

* *Hutchins's chief accomplice in this project was Dr. Mortimer J. Adler, star of the current PBS television series "Six Great Ideas," and author of a book of the same title. The series, the book, and the ideas are reviewed by Hugh Kenner on page 56 of this issue.* [Ed.]

pletely and Comfort got his money back. "It was a real skunk-out," says Comfort. "I think Hutchins one day decided to retire, and retire on my money."

After the collapse, Comfort set up his own center, The Institute for Higher Studies. This institute has no offices and operates like a chess game through the mails. Comfort and a few colleagues write back and forth, working out problems in physics and biology. The institute publishes papers based on this process.

Comfort is also upset about the effect of the sex books. "They've done a lot of good," he says, "and I'm delighted about that. But they have become a bloody albatross."

"Americans are always asking us to go on talk shows and do two minutes on sex between Zah-Zah Gab-ah and a talkative mouse or something," says Jane.

"Mr. and Mrs. Sex, that's what we've become," he sighs,

"Actually," Jane says, "we're medical missionaries. Right now we have just concluded a school book on alcoholism. It's part of a series of science texts for teenagers." And Comfort, at age sixty-two, continues to practice as a physician, going down to a local hospital and the UCLA Medical Center once a week to teach and do rounds with the residents.

Nevertheless, he broods about his position. "If you're at all concerned that people might think you're a scientist gone charlie—"

"Gone charlie?"

"Yes, gone charlie—gone soft, gone a little nutty—then books like the Talese book aren't helpful. And neither is the reputation for being just a sex guru. It makes it very hard to move on to the next subject. And right now there are a number of other things I want to work on. I have a book about the way various scientists think about the world. Quantum physics has changed things completely, but some scientists are still Newtonian. . . . But every publisher I give it to turns into a frog when he reads it. They just keep muttering 'knee-deep, knee-deep' about it. Medawar liked it, though," a reference to P. B. Medawar, the Nobel Prize-winning biologist.

"And then I have those two novels in the pipeline. One is the story of an English officer in the Indian army who discovers that he's a natural yogi. He finds himself breaking, unwillingly all sorts of taboos about family life. He commits incest with his sister, discovers that many people believe he has already died—indeed, he learns that he's been cremated—and doesn't understand what's happening to him. Eventually he goes to a guru and asks, 'What does it all mean?' The guru tells him, 'How many hints does the goddess have to drop? You're a natural yogi.'

"The other novel is about Nero's physician. Nero was a pop singer, sort of like Elvis in his popularity . . . And that business of fiddling while Rome burned is bad press. Before he was fiddling he had gone to help put out the fire, but the chief of the fire brigade resented his being underfoot, so he left. After the fire, Nero put out a press release trying to straighten the thing out; issuing the press release was the typical stupid sort of thing that Nero would do. . . ."

Despite his fantastic sales record, Comfort can't find a publisher for any of these books. "The publishing industry," he says, "is really lying dead on a marble slab with a sprig of parsley stuck up its arse."

Despite a lifetime of political activism, Comfort has stayed away from politics since moving to the United States. "It would be counterproductive," he says. But on one crucial issue, "the lack of a comprehensive health care system for the elderly," Alex and Jane Comfort are voting with their feet. "American research into gerontology is very good," says Alex. "That's why I came here. But American geriatric medicine is poor. So as soon as Jane or I hit sixty-five or show signs of infirmity we are heading back to Britain."

And Comfort is keeping his hand in British politics, in a small way, from a distance. During the Falklands crisis, he wrote to the *Times* of London suggesting that the British government should stop developing heat-seeking missiles. "Instead," he explained to me, "they should develop '*caudillo*-seeking miss-aisles.'" He amplified: "We ought not to rely on war, in which ships get sunk and so on, but we should carry out selective assassination of tyrants. The first government that can say to the next cockroach general who comes along what Jezebel said to Elijah—'The gods will surely do so to me and more also, if I make thee not like unto one of these dead men here by tomorrow at about this time'—will be much in favor."

Alex Comfort promises: "British politicians can watch out for their asses as soon as I get back there."

Comfort's beau idéal is a British politician, one Honorable Ivor Montagu. "He was an *Honorable*, that is to say he was the son of a peer and would succeed to his father's title. Yet he was also the secretary of the British Communist Party. He was also the president of the International Table Tennis Federation. To me, he was the quintessential Englishman—he could do a great many unrelated things." The same thought can be put more grandiosely, and Comfort has done that, too. "Over the gate of the University of London Hospital is the motto: '*homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto.*' It's the perfect motto for a physician and for me. It translates as: 'I am a man: all human business is my business.'" ■

INVESTMENTS

A story

by Jonathan Penner

DAVID KAPLAN, a freelance illustrator of thirty-six who lived in Greenwich Village, was practically the only person he knew who had never been in psychotherapy. Now, when he had almost decided to start, he feared he was making a mistake. No shrink could help with what worried him most: all his money was in the stock market, which had sunk to a new low and might collapse entirely—who could tell?

Not his stockbroker, Kaplan was sure. Steve, who was also his cousin, had tricked and bullied him when they were children. Once he had duped Kaplan into eating clay, moist pellets the size of jelly beans, warm from Steve's rolling palms. Often Kaplan could still taste it.

Whenever he mentioned this to his cousin, Steve grew furious, denying that anything like it had happened. Kaplan was crackers, he said, one hand jingling the coins in his pocket, his bald head shining aggressively. Kaplan needed to be shrunk, but *fast*. "My guy's terrific," Steve said. "See him for Barbara's sake, if you won't for your own." Steve's guy was Phil Traub.

Kaplan's mother, however, recommended a Dr. DelVecchio, who had worked wonders for her friends. "Edith Timmerman was climbing the walls," she said. "And now!" To suggest Edith's present relaxation, Kaplan's mother released a ball of cigarette smoke with a pop of her lips. Kaplan screwed up his eyes. She apologized. But the ball was already expanding, enveloping Kaplan as he flapped his hand at it.

His girlfriend, Jane—his first affair as a married man—was pushing for Frederika Grunwald, her own therapist for four years. "She can't shrink us both, can she?" Kaplan asked. "Whose side would she be on?"

But though he raised objections, he secretly welcomed all advice. If he was going to go into this at all (and he still had serious doubts), the important thing was to choose his doctor carefully.

It was for a Monday that he managed to set up the appointments. "I'll probably be all right," his wife said. Thoughtfully she felt her breastbone, like an item of produce perhaps too ripe. "Suppose I need to go to the hospital?"

"Isn't your painting group meeting here?" Barbara belonged to a circle of artists who shared a model once a week.

"I'll have to call that off." She peered at Kaplan. "You think I'm making it up?"

He shook his head. Ever since her heart attack, Barbara had been weak and floppy as a houseplant, and often terrified him by holding her chest and turning pale. "If you don't feel well," he said, "you should rest." The concern that he heard in his voice depressed him. It was as though he wanted to stay with her, today and forever.

"Your pity is a razor blade," she said.

"Don't start this, okay?"

"If I thought I could rely on the ambulance I wouldn't even ask you."

"What's this ambulance?"

"I can always call your mother." She turned away. Kaplan could see, through her thinning hair, the dead white of her scalp. "Go, David," she said. "Go."

HIS FIRST appointment was at ten with Traub, who practiced high up in an old building west of Central Park. The chairs in Traub's office were covered with white Naugahyde, the Naugahyde with transparent plastic. Kaplan was revolted and sat with difficulty. It was like the waiting room at his mother's beauty parlor.

When Kaplan said his life was succumbing to entropy, had lost its critical mass—when he told how his life seemed to be living him, rather than vice versa—Traub soon began making dismissive finger-flicks at the air, as though Kaplan's words hung there in a cartoonist's bubble. "I'd like some specifics," he said.

"Some particulars?"

"Specifics, particulars," Traub said indifferently.

Kaplan couldn't stand a quibbler. "Money," he said. "You mean like that?"

"Money," Traub agreed.

"My father's estate was in the six figures. Then I let my cousin Steve put me in new issues. Ham

Jonathan Penner, author of the novel Going Blind, *teaches fiction writing at the University of Arizona.*

King? A franchise deal, trades on the fame of Hamilton King."

"Hamilton King?"

"I bought it at eleven. Sold it at eight. Then there was Medicomp."

"The baseball player?"

"Golfer," said Kaplan, annoyed. It seemed to him painfully affected for a man with these chairs not to know Hamilton King. "Medicomp we missed at issue. It came at fifteen, I caught it at seventeen; I was lucky to get out at twelve. What's left is in Protection Devices. Systems to prevent airplane hijacks? Steve touted it to me at six, I bought it at nine; now the bid price is three and an eighth." Across the room, a digital clock advanced to 10:16. "It's money."

"Money."

"Money."

"Specifics."

"One thing, I married unhappily. If I could afford the support, I'd leave Barbara."

"Why are you looking at the clock?"

"The market opened at ten."

"And your money may be trickling away." Traub dragged everything he could from the word: trick-a-ling. "How does that make you feel?"

Kaplan had a mental picture of his large, bald cousin cradling a telephone receiver between shoulder and ear while with delicate fingers he unwrapped a candy bar. "I'm sitting in Protection Devices, off two last week. Say now I call and ask Steve, Steve, shouldn't I get out. He'll tell me take it easy, take it easy, *bubby*, the big boys are driving out the weak money. Hang tough for Barbara's sake, if you can't for your own."

"And this makes you feel—"

"Agonized."

"I mean now." Traub frowned. "I don't believe you're feeling a thing. You own how many shares of Protection Devices?"

Kaplan saw that he could never work with Traub. "Fifteen thousand."

"So let's see. Last week you lost thirty thousand dollars."

"Okay, I should have sold right then. Steve talked me out of it."

"And how did you feel after you let him do that?"

Now Traub had pierced him. Kaplan pictured himself replacing the phone after that conversation with Steve, and the feeling he had had came gurgling up, a nauseous, ruptured sensation. "This is absurd, sitting here talking about it. You'd sell, wouldn't you, Dr. Traub? I ought to be parked in Treasury bills." He spotted the telephone. "Let me call, please."

Traub said nothing, but seemed amused. Kaplan guessed that Traub had written him off. Steve appeared to be away from his desk, said the switchboard girl. The Dow? Off twelve. No, Kaplan said, Steve couldn't call him, he'd try later.



David FeBland



When he hung up he realized that he'd been cradling the phone to hide it from Traub, who was now standing. "I know," Kaplan said. "My fault. I felt negative the minute I walked in. Personal things like furnishings"—he shuddered and gathered himself in the chair—"shouldn't matter. It's my own fault. I'm an illustrator. My wife paints."

Traub was his. He stared at Kaplan for a long moment, then couldn't stop himself from answering, "The taste is my wife's."

KAPLAN's next appointment was with short, silver-haired DelVecchio, the kind of rugged little man who always made him want to confide. Water buffalo, Kaplan thought. "Barbara's clever, but cold," he said, looking around the room. "I'll admit this, she's been loyal." It was the paintings: swirling oils in thickly caked earth tones, slapped on with a putty knife. Cattle wallows. "Jane's spontaneous and warm, but I don't know whether to trust her."

As though exasperated, DelVecchio sighed. He sat behind a desk, which Kaplan had thought psychiatrists never did—a fussy desk—antique, richly carved, carelessly refinished.

"A younger man is after her," Kaplan said. "A fellow student, one Conrad. She says he's just an entertaining mind. I'm not sure what to think."

"You're not angry?" DelVecchio's eyebrows rose dramatically, as though he were acting out the word *astonished* in a game of charades.

"In a personal sense he's nothing to me."

"What sort of man wouldn't feel anger? How would you describe such a man?"

Kaplan shrugged. He had always liked being told what he was feeling, on which his mind was more open than he guessed it should be, but he was starting to feel disoriented. DelVecchio's manner suggested that he was not here with Kaplan alone. He spoke and gestured as though from a stage, making Kaplan suspect that this session was being videotaped. A shrink would relish that question.

"Or maybe," DelVecchio pursued, "you haven't invested much in Jane, despite what you're telling me. I want to hear more about your wife."

Kaplan said he'd get a divorce if he could afford one, and explained how Steve's advice had left him practically broke.

"I decided this morning to sell out, but he's away from his desk while the market is collapsing."

"And toward him you feel—"

"Resentment, naturally."

"Resentment." DelVecchio screwed up his face in a pantomime of confusion. He scratched his head and shook it.

"There's something I'm not getting here. Mere resentment?"

"You don't know Steve. His stupidity is a force of nature. You don't hate the weather."

DelVecchio nodded, satisfied, as though Kaplan's response nicely confirmed a pretty hypothesis. "We'll need to talk more about your cousin."

"I'd like to talk to him now," Kaplan said. "May I call?"

DelVecchio pushed his phone across the desk. But the word was that Steve had gone for the day. The Dow was off nineteen.

Kaplan slammed down the phone, shouting, "How can he leave in the middle of a panic? At this moment I could be wiped out."

DelVecchio tilted back and crossed his ankles on

his desk. "What sort of man am I describing?" he said, and began ticking points off on his fingers. "Despite lack of gratification, helplessly orbits his invalided wife. Approaching forty, he's troubled by his hatred of his mother. He hasn't been able to manage his money or even rescue it from his dominant cousin. He's calm about the possible loss of his girlfriend. He feels what? A genteel resentment." Dramatizing disbelief, DelVecchio half averted his face, pushing the heels of both palms toward Kaplan in a double stiff-arm. "I don't buy that."

Kaplan felt suddenly exhausted. "I'll never convince you," he said. "And you'll never convince me, the way you do those reactions. Why not say what you think? You've got the case all doped out."

DelVecchio's feet stayed on his desk. "As a matter of fact I have," he said. "First of all, the switch to a new libidinal object is a universal fantasy, someday they'll find a gene for it. As for investing, I like special-situation asset plays. But this is superficial. We don't change the world, we change ourselves." Now his feet came down and he leaned forward earnestly. "You've got to stop being so passive, just as I had to. Look." He tugged back a cuff. "Last night I repaired this watch myself. Notice the paintings?" He swept an arm through the air. "Mine. I refinished every piece in my home. And office." He rapped his knuckles on the desk.

KAPLAN met Jane for lunch at Oscar's. She hadn't slept, and her headache was killing her. Jane's headaches were frequent. The more haggard she looked, the more touchingly lovely Kaplan thought her. He wondered whether at such times she reminded him of Barbara. Sometimes, sitting on the edge of Jane's bed, massaging her scalp, he felt the profoundest peace he had known in years.

But today his sorrow was for himself, and he resented her being in pain. Over the chowder, he told her that his hopes now rested with Frederika Grunwald.

"Freddy's brilliant, but she's not the good witch," Jane said. "It's not fair to expect a transformation."

"I don't expect that," Kaplan said, "and why are you protecting her?"

Jane scraped angrily at the bottom of her bowl. "On this of all days, you should be protecting me."

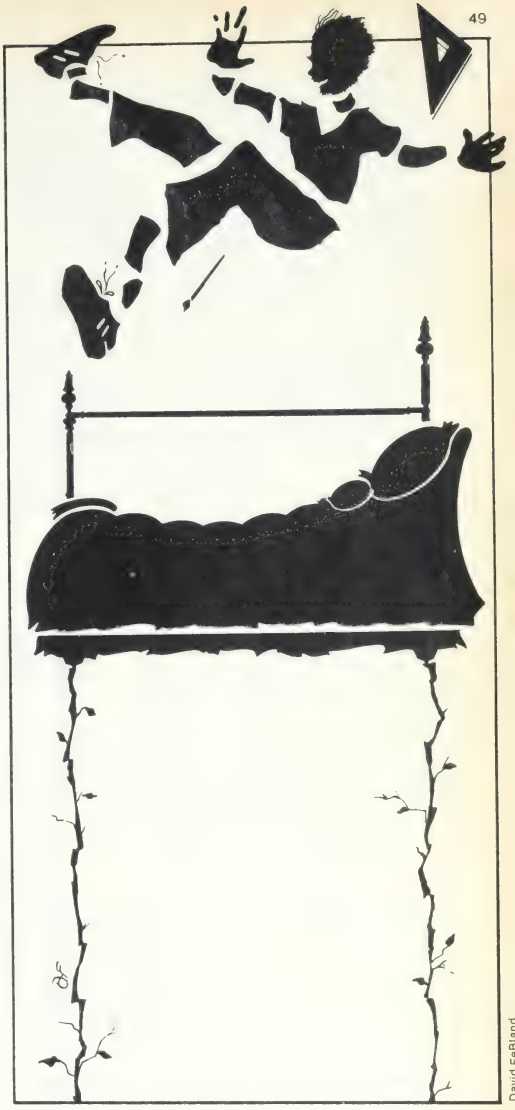
"That's exactly what I'm doing."

Kaplan waved for the next course. The waiter removed their chowder bowls. "Let's say I asked you to come with me right now, take a taxi to the airport, and fly somewhere and start a new life. Don't look that way, it isn't a test."

"I've never believed you wanted that."

"Would you?"

The fish arrived. Jane rubbed her temples. "David, don't make me do this. Can't you see how sick I feel?"



David Eastland

A yolk of tenderness ballooned and burst in Kaplan's heart. "Okay," he said gently. Jane looked relieved, and Kaplan realized with fear that he too felt relieved at letting it drop.

Jane accompanied him to the Yorkville apartment where Frederika Grunwald lived and worked. She begged two aspirin tablets from the psychoanalyst, a wattled dwarf neutered with age, and collapsed into a sagging loveseat in the waiting room. Kaplan followed Dr. Grunwald into the consulting room. A

threadbare path crossed the Oriental carpet; the sofa's black leather was splitting with age. Grunwald herself looked frayed and poor, which disturbed Kaplan in view of her fee: seventy-five, this was costing him.

He sat on the lumpy sofa and smoothly, this third time, talked about himself. But when he was done she shook her head and said, "I had not quite understood. I couldn't treat anyone who is deeply involved with another of my patients."

"I told Jane that," Kaplan said, annoyed. "I knew you'd feel this way. Why did you even agree to see me?"

The old woman looked embarrassed. "I think I must apologize," she said.

"Jane didn't tell you that she and I are intimate?"

She said nothing, but shook her head slowly in reprimand of herself. Her dewlap swung.

"Then what has she been telling you?" Kaplan demanded. He was beginning to feel dizzily weak, the way he had when he and Barbara, both sick with the flu, had tried to make love anyway. "Didn't she tell you that I was her lover? Or did she say her lover was Conrad?"

"Jane is a most attractive girl," the psychoanalyst said comfortingly. "I think all of us have been seduced a little."

Kaplan jumped up in a spasm of despair. "Dr. Grunwald," he said, "this has been very useful. I don't need psychotherapy at all. I know my problems, don't you think so? Now I have to—"

He hurried out to the waiting room, where Jane lay rigid on the floor, holding her head between spread fingers. "This is the worst one ever," she whispered. "This is agony."

Kaplan grabbed her by the arm. "Come on."

"You'll take me home?"

"To my house."

"No, this is killing me."

In the cab he howled at her, ignoring the driver's glances from his rearview mirror. She shrank against her door and threatened to get out at the next light. Kaplan forced himself to fold his arms. "Freddy told me you and Conrad are lovers."

"Freddy didn't tell you that."

"You've always been a coward. This was your miserable way of ending it."

"He's just an entertaining mind, all right?"

The phrase failed to tranquilize Kaplan as it had in the past. "Okay," he said, "I'm going to believe you. Here's what we'll do. You'll go home while I arrange things with Barbara. I'll tell her it's over and I'll convert everything to cash. Then you and I take off."

But Jane was slowly shaking her bowed head, her face hidden in her hands. "I can't let you do that," she said in a muffled voice.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kaplan said raggedly.

She looked up. Her wet eyes were brilliant. "David, you were wonderful to me. Right now I feel"—she searched for a comparison—"like your mother."

He understood, without any real surprise, that she was through with him. His first feeling was shame. Then, before he realized he was angry, he was swinging a backhand at her. She raised her pocketbook and he cracked his knuckles agonizingly on its metal buckle. "That's it, Jane, that's it," he shouted, until the words were only sound.

But by the time the cab turned onto his street, Kaplan was calmer. Though things were now bad, he felt that he was getting to the bottom of them, ripping the last bandages from a rotten wound. He leaned forward, elbows on knees, fingers laced behind his neck, drawing breath and expelling it carefully.

When they pulled up in front of his brownstone, he could see people from Barbara's painting group at the windows of his second-floor apartment.

"So long," he told Jane.

"David, not like this," she pleaded. But he got out, paid the driver, and gave him Jane's address. The cab pulled away.

Life, Kaplan realized, was brilliantly simple. He entered his building and climbed the stairs, one foot appearing before him as the other plunged away. It was just one moment that you perpetually had to endure. When he reached the top of the stairs, he found his apartment door open. The living room seemed crowded. In the doorway stood his mother, her face red and wet. Next to her was his cousin Steve.

"Where have you been?" his mother demanded.

"Getting sold out," Kaplan said bitterly. Then he told Steve, "You bastard. I needed you today. I wanted to liquidate."

"I'm sorry," Steve said. He grabbed Kaplan, hugged him, and began to weep. "I came here when your mother called."

Kaplan freed himself from Steve's arms. For a moment he watched their twisting faces, then rushed past them into his apartment. In the kitchen, a man was crouched before the open refrigerator. He stood and turned: it was the rabbi, holding a jar of something. Barbara's sister filled the hallway but Kaplan pushed past her, ran to the bedroom, ripped the bedding from the great empty bed. He flung it through the air, his nostrils dilating with Barbara's smell.

He was through. That was the only idea that came to Kaplan. There was nothing left in the world for him to worry about. They were staring at him from the bedroom doorway, and he stared back at them. "Okay," he said mildly. But moment by moment it seemed better than okay. Kaplan felt as relieved as a merchant escaping into bankruptcy. He was as grateful as a gambler in love with a crooked game, who is cleaned out at last, and can go home and sleep. ■











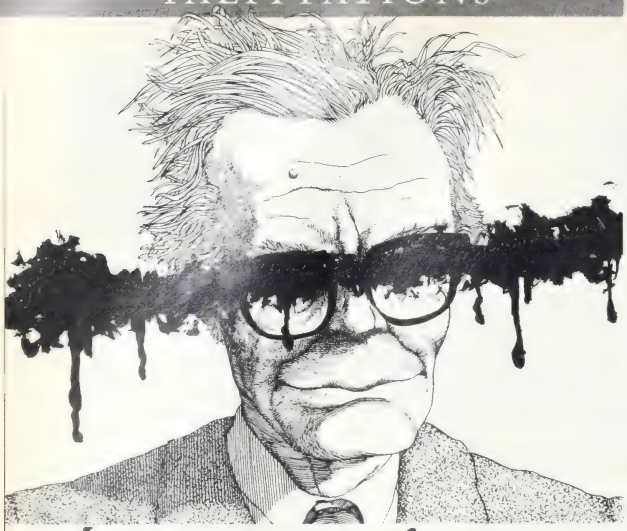








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The Limits of Poetic License

by James Wolcott

The more you learn about Robert Lowell's life, the less you want to read his poems.

WHEN genius goes wildly off the rails, the bones of innocent bystanders may be scattered for miles. The American poet Robert Lowell was such a locomotive of talent and fierce ambition, tossing off not only the famous poems of *Life Studies* and *Lord Weary's Castle* but plays, reviews, bursts of polemic, scatters of reminiscence, and loose, idiosyncratic translations (which he wisely labeled "imitations"). So determined and strapping a figure was Lowell that when he hopped the tracks into unruly dementia, it took a squad of volunteers to cart him off to the mental ward. When Lowell had a breakdown in Argentina in 1962, six muscular numbers wrestled him into a straitjacket in a hotel corridor, and an awed witness to that tussle later commented: "I'd never realized the power of mania, physically." Lowell himself in a poem compared such struggles to scrambles on the football field in which "helmeted doctors" in white smocks hit him with a gang-tackle "and bury me running on the cleated field."

Although the thought of Lowell dodging shrinks as announcers shout themselves hoarse in the press booth is a comic hoot (*he's at the ten, the twenty, the thirty . . . !*), his breakdowns were surely no treat to those close to him, and in a poem entitled "Eye and Tooth" he admitted, "I am tired. Everyone's tired of my turmoil." Small surprise then that Ian Hamilton's relentless new biography, *Robert Lowell*,* soon turns into a turmoil chronicle, with Lowell swinging in and out of sanitoria as if he were being pitched into a revolving door. Brief holidays of sunlight are broken by pounding black squalls, and into the depot the locomotive crashes.

ON ONE level, Hamilton (himself a poet and critic based in London) has written a long study in lit-world discipleship. Even as a student, Lowell felt compelled to make disciples of his friends, down to setting the menu. "We had dreadful health food all the time," says Blair Clark, recalling a summer spent with Lowell and Frank Parker in a cottage at Nantucket. "The diet was eels—cooked by me, badly—and a dreadful cereal with raw honey. All decided by Cal." (Cal, as in Caligula: Lowell's despotic tendencies helped earn him a nickname inspired by the mad Roman emperor.) Later, at Harvard, Lowell mapped out his friends' futures. "He announced to Frank Parker and Blair Clark that the trio's energies should henceforth be directed exclusively towards the arts. Parker, he declared, would be a painter; Clark would be a musician—or, failing that, a philosopher. He, Lowell, was the poet. Parker's obedience was so complete that he left Harvard during his first year in order to devote himself to his new calling. . . ." As a caterpillar in the writing trade, Lowell would turn disciple himself, first to the poet Richard Eberhart (who later wrote a verse play about Lowell called *The Crystal Sepulcher*, which Hamilton backhands as "strikingly inept") and soon after to the Southern "Fugitive" poet Allen Tate. In a famous incident, Lowell camped out on the Tates' front lawn in Tennessee in a pup tent, his visit the result of a wiggy misunderstanding. "I think I suggested that may-

* Random House, $19.95.

be I'd stay with them," Lowell told an interviewer from the *Paris Review*. "And they said, 'We really haven't any room, you'd have to pitch a tent on the lawn.' So I went to Sears, Roebuck and got a tent and rigged it on their lawn. The Tates were too polite to tell me that what they'd said had been just a figure of speech." Allen Tate may well have regretted such hospitality —years later, as a joke, Lowell presented Tate's wife with a list of Tate's lovers. Some joke!—duels have been fought for less.

With discipleship comes a desire to instruct and bully, and some of the most unsettling pages in *Robert Lowell* show the poet flinging his weight around as if the whole world were his galleon. When a political scandal broke out at the writers' retreat Yaddo involving its director, Elizabeth Ames (she was accused of succoring a Marxist subversive), Lowell swanked about the deck with a cutlass eager for lopping. Presenting his case to the Yaddo board, Lowell described Mrs. Ames as "a diseased organ, chronically poisoning the whole system. . . ." Warnings were then fired broadside.

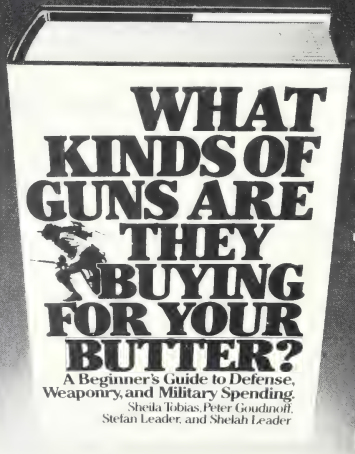
> *If action is not taken by the Board that we consider adequate, I intend to confer with certain people in New York, among them Trilling, Rahv, Hook, and Haggin, and immediately to call a large meeting of the more important former Yaddo guests. . . .*
>
> *I think it only fair to tell the Board that I have myself influential friends in the world of culture* [what a telling phrase!], *nine-tenths of whom in the course of my ordinary correspondence and conversation will be informed of this affair within three months. I want to give their names—I think it quite relevant: Santayana, Frost, Eliot, Williams, Ransom, Moore (in case you think I'm bluffing, I only know Miss Moore slightly but think she would agree), Bishop, Tate, Blackmur, Warren, Auden, Adams, Bogan, Empson. Of my own generation, Robert Fitzgerald, Jarrell, Bishop, Schwartz, Shapiro, Taylor, Powers, Stafford, and Berryman. We shall also take steps to see that the important people in the world of music and painting are fully informed. I should say, most of my friends are writers, but I have connections in Washington and I shall take steps to see that the matter is aired there, too.*

Oh, shove off, one mutters to the walls. When the swell of Lowell's ego spilled over into madness, the name-dropping became even more grandly presumptuous. After one of Lowell's crack-ups, the poet William Meredith visited him in the hospital and reported to friends, "[He] writes and revises translations furiously and with a kind [of] crooked brilliance, and talks about himself in connection with Achilles, Alexander, Hart Crane, Hitler and Christ, and breaks your heart."

From Caligula to Hitler, tyrants trod a heavy step in Lowell's steep, craggy mind, and it comes as sobering news that Lowell kept a copy of *Mein Kampf* on his shelf, disguised in a book jacket for Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Jonathan Miller, who spotted the book when he was in New York to direct Lowell's *The Old Glory* for the stage, had other unsettling surprises in store. ". . . I remember him meeting me at the airport and I could see him on the mezzanine, sort of sweating, and his spectacles seemed steamed over, and he came down to greet me and he was wearing an open-necked shirt and there was a huge medallion of Alexander bouncing on his chest. And as he greeted me there were three or four Hasidic rabbis coming off the plane and a sort of mischievous look came into his eyes, and he said, 'Oh, Jonathan, the Germans were not responsible for World War Two.' "

So violent and familiar became the agitations of Lowell's mind that when Lowell was offered up as a candidate for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, W. H. Auden wrote in a letter that he backed his candidacy but felt that his other supporters ought to be aware that "Cal has times when he has to go into the bin." The warning signals? "a) He announces that he is the *only* living poet, b) a romantic and

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usually platonic attraction to a young girl and c) he gives a huge party." (Lowell's feverish identification with tyrants past made for a fourth.) Even the specter of suicide became a source of grim amusement. After Lowell's friend and fellow poet John Berryman leapt to his death from a bridge in 1972, the newspapers reported that Berryman didn't leave behind a suicide note. "A malicious joke (said by many to have originated with Auden) was that Berryman *did* leave a note. It read simply: 'Your move, Cal.'"

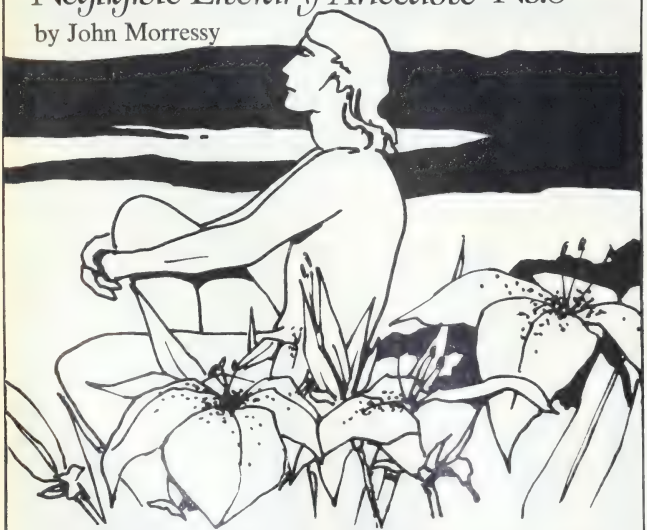
BUT UNDER the wisecracks about the distress lapping around Lowell's life, there was true distress, true anguish. The most painful pages in *Robert Lowell* are those that document Lowell's physical and poetical cruelties to the women who kept watch over his weaving borders. On Christmas Day, 1938, Lowell and his bride-to-be, Jean Stafford, were involved in a car crash in which Stafford's nose was "crushed" and her face disfigured. The horrific details of the effort to repair Stafford's nose are given in her famous story "The Interior Castle," in which her protagonist, Pansy, scales a nightmarish winding stair of suffering: "Watching [the surgeon], Pansy could already feel the prongs of his pliers opening her nostrils for the insertion of his fine probers." Considering the flaming-nerved hell such operations put Stafford through, it's a shock to learn in Hamilton's book that a few years later during a quarrel Lowell struck Stafford full in the face and broke her nose *again*. "The nose which had been carefully repaired was broken again," says Frank Parker, who was there on the scene. "She had to start all over again repairing the nose, after the awful time she'd had getting it repaired in the first place." *Did he do it?* Hamilton asks. *It wasn't just Jean saying he did?* "No, Cal said he really did hit her and he felt the nose go and everything. . . ."

Punishment of a different sort was dished out to Lowell's second wife, the novelist and critic Elizabeth Hardwick. Not only did Lowell's infidelities become the common buzz of gossip in New York and London literary circles, but he even stooped to spicing his poems with indiscreet sentences lifted from Hardwick's correspondence. When *The Dolphin* and *For Lizzie and Harriet* were published, Adrienne Rich fumed in the *American Poetry Review*: "Finally, what does one say about a poet who, having left his wife and daughter for another marriage [in 1972, Lowell married Lady Caroline Blackwood], then titles a book with their names, and goes on to appropriate his ex-wife's letters written under the stress and pain of desertion, into a book of poems nominally addressed to the new wife?" Certainly it seems in dubious taste to include in a volume dedicated to one's daughter and former wife a poem that goes on swoonily about a student who shared the poet's bed: ". . . . shouldn't I ask to hold to you forever,/body of a dolphin, breast of cloud?/You rival the renewal of the day,/clearing the puddles with your green sack of books." The cloud-breasted student later followed Lowell to England, land of many puddles, and left when the vacillations of Lowell's affections led to burdensome exhaustion.

As for Hardwick, the exhausting strain on her nerves can barely be imagined. After all this fussing back and forth across the Atlantic, Lowell comforted himself with the knowledge that many English reviewers (unlike their insulting American cousins) compared *The Dolphin* with Yeats's last poems—a comparison that I suspect future critics will regard as more kind than just. But then perhaps my own exhaustion with Robert Lowell and *Robert Lowell* is curdling my judgments. After reading Ian Hamilton's biography, I felt achy and scuffed, as if Lowell himself had been digging his heels in my ribs.

Negligible Literary Anecdote No.8

by John Morressy



One fine summer morning, when William Blake was seated in his garden, nude, conversing with spirits, a tradesman called to inquire about payment for certain engraving tools. Blake did not answer the door. Eventually the tradesman went away.

The breakdowns, the tantrums, the bruised feelings, the needling slights, the slosh of booze and the gulp of sedatives—the furies feasting on Robert Lowell's innards are all fully documented by the diligent Hamilton, but, finally, what is all this *for*? Gossip-avid as I am, I really am tired of reading about American poets courting suicide and dunking their heads into the punch bowl as prim faculty wives look aghast. Eileen Simpson's recent memoir *Poets in Their Youth* had its share of punch-bowl antics, but it also was buoyed with a tender respect for the strivings of Berryman (her former husband), Lowell, Jarrell, and Blackmur as poets—they weren't merely neuros busting up the furniture. Ian Hamilton's biography of Lowell isn't a serrated sawing-away at Lowell's reputation in the tradition of Lawrance Thompson's book on Robert Frost or T. S. Matthews's long sneer at T. S. Eliot, entitled *Great Tom* (in which Matthews crassly attempted to lift the sheets in Eliot's bedroom: "Did he masturbate? Of course. And was he ashamed of it? Unspeakably."), but it *is* a curiously dour, dogged, and conscientiously chill effort, a book that buries its subject under a heap of clutter. Undoubtedly other reviewers of *Robert Lowell* will advise readers to delve into Lowell's poetry to take his true measure as a writer—that the untidy lurches of Lowell's life shouldn't serve as a distraction or impediment. Pretty sentiments, but the truth is that after reading *Robert Lowell* you really don't *want* to crack open the poems—you can't wait to comb Robert Lowell and his distresses out of your head.

PERHAPS *Robert Lowell* reads like a chore because researching the book proved a laborious chore for Hamilton, and he's simply passing his fatigue on like a baton. (The only break in the glum cataloguing of detail comes when Hamilton quotes from Norman Mailer and Jean Stafford—their writing is so salty and shrewd that it perks up even this sluggish soiree.) It certainly can't be said that Hamilton's esteem for Lowell as a poet burns with a high tongue of flame. He complains of "the limp translatorese" that gives *Imitations* its wilt, applauds Rolfe Humphries's "refreshingly plainspoken" dismissal of *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*, and says of the plays that make up *The Old Glory*, "to call them 'poetic' is charitable, since they are mostly written in ambling prose. . . ." It isn't that Hamilton is necessarily wrong in his appraisals, just that if enthusiasm for Lowell's work runs so thinly in his blood, then why do the book at all? Why not leave the spadework to someone who would more vigorously cherish the task?

Perhaps Hamilton was seduced by the notion of making a stamp on his time with a major biography. Robert Lowell, after all, was not only a writer of immense gifts and intelligence, but he had the look of a Great Poet—the shambling height, the brooding, tormented brow, the Ezra Pound glint of cracked brilliance in the eyes. And a Great Poet deserves a Great Biography, a sturdy monument where pigeons can convene. But though Hamilton says commending things about Lowell and his work, and ends his biography with a citation from *King Lear* ("We that are young/Shall never see so much, nor live so long"), you finally don't believe that Hamilton believes that Lowell was a figure of greatness. Instead, Lowell emerges as an unholy handful Hamilton can hardly wait to lateral into our laps.

After the personal, newsy jottings of *Notebook* and *Day by Day*, Lowell's reputation took a dip, and it's unlikely that Hamilton's biography will do much to spur fresh enthusiasm. In the literary quarterly *Salmagundi* (Spring–Summer 1979), Charles Molesworth makes a spirited case for the "snapshot" pieceiness of Lowell's last poems, saying that they settle for a "redemptive factuality." But for a poet who longed for Miltonic elevation, the scrapbook ruminations of those later works can only be considered a comedown. Snapshots, after all, come to mean little to those outside an intimate circle of associates; they belong in a drawer, not on a museum mural. Which is not to say that Lowell's career was a failure, that the best poems of *Lord Weary's Castle* and *Life Studies* won't stand long after all the nutsy hubbub in Lowell's life has cooled to ash. But reading *Robert Lowell*, you can't but feel that the derailments caused by his madness kept him off the highest slopes and made him instead one of our most treasured, distinguished minor classics. Perhaps the next to last word should go to a poet Lowell highly (and rightly) admired, Philip Larkin. In a recent interview, Larkin was asked about the cult of madness in poetry and replied, "There certainly is a cult of the mad these days: think of all the boys who've been in the bin—I don't understand it. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Hardy—it's the big, sane boys who get the medals." *Robert Lowell* will bring those medals no closer to grasp. ■

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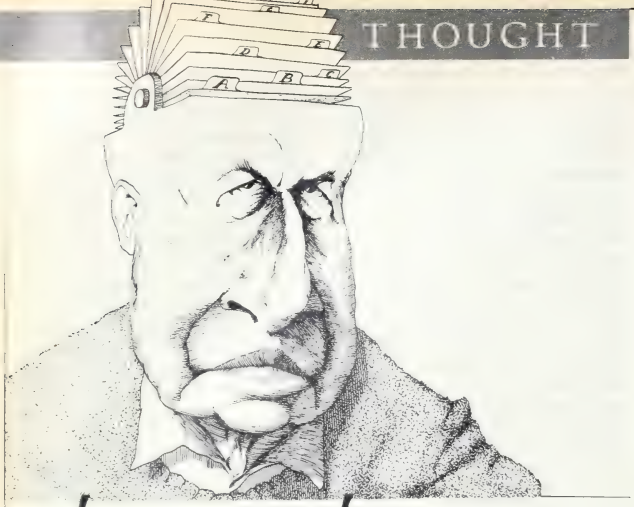
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Please Welcome My Next Idea

by Hugh Kenner

Truth, Beauty, Dr. Mortimer J. Adler, Goodness, Public Television, Liberty, Bill Moyers, Equality, the Aspen Institute, and Justice.

("Six Great Ideas," a six-part television series currently on PBS stations, features Professor Mortimer J. Adler presiding over seminars at the Aspen Institute and in conversation with Bill Moyers, executive producer.)

"I have, of course," writes Mortimer J. Adler, "read most of the great books on the subject, and some of the nearly great." The "subject" is God, and of the books about God that our man has not read, you will observe that he knows already which ones are great, which ones no more than *nearly* great. And how does he know that, not having read them? Does he trust the anonymous pasters of labels on packages? Does it take one to know one?

Hugh Kenner teaches at Johns Hopkins University and is the author of many books.

We take you now to the Next World. At his desk in a cubicle just past the receptionist's station, the Recording Angel fingers his Rolodex. Whether ablaze in some random shaft of transfulgence or occulted by floating wisps, his face does not lose its disorienting resemblance to Howard Cosell's. It has been a long day in Eternity. On the hatstand to his left he has hung his halo. Unbuckled, furled, his Dacron wings, all six, gleam from a species of umbrella stand. His tie is loose about an unbuttoned collar. The client of the moment, in yellow Lacoste shirt and slate blue slacks, hands clasped between his knees, hunches forward.

Angel: Adler, Mortimer Jerome. Born (*he consults the card*) N.Y.C., 28 Dec. '02; s. Ignatz and Clarissa (Manheim) A.; Ph.D. Columbia U., 1928 . . . Associate editor *Great Books of the Western World,* 1945–; dir. editorial planning, 15th ed. *Enc. Brit.*, 1966–; Columbia in the '20s . . . John Erskine's time, I suppose; and John Dewey's?

Adler (*quick to ignore the mention of Dewey*)**:** Marvelous teacher, John Erskine. I read the Great Books under his guidance. We read about sixty books in two years, and discussed them once a week on Wednesday nights. I learned, I think, how to discuss the Great Books and how to lead discussions of the Great Books from him. And the more I read them, the more I studied them, the more I led discussions of them, the more I discovered that the heart of the Great Books was the Great Ideas—the Great Ideas they discuss—there in those books is the Western discussion, the Western consideration. . . . ["Truth"*]

Angel: Wait, wait, we are not at Columbia. We are sticklers for syntax here. And "Western," what is "Western"?

Adler: Western . . . why, Western. As in Western Man.

Angel (*producing a globe*)**:** Man west of what? The Timor Sea? The Urals? Cincinnati?

Adler: Bill Moyers never asked me such things.

Angel: True, I have the transcript. (*He opens a file.*) Bill Moyers asked you—that was at Aspen, in front of a TV camera—"But are you looking at the world from a peculiarly Western center?" He assumed you knew what he meant.

Adler: He did know what I meant. And I told him . . .

Angel: I have in front of me what you told him. You said: "I have found that the ideas that—the great ideas that I've been concerned with are Western ideas. I think it is—I think I'm talking not about the great ideas of world culture, which doesn't exist yet, but the great ideas of Western culture. I have to admit that this is parochial." ["Truth"] You were not at your most coherent. Perhaps at your most impassioned?

Adler: Perhaps.

Angel: Maybe most defensively

* Television transcript.

William Bramhall

impassioned?

Adler: . . . Perhaps.

THAT exchange between Professor Mortimer J. Adler and Bill Moyers occurred at Aspen, where the 1981 Executive Seminar on "Truth" (a Great Idea, one of six finalists) had come to flash point, Adler having incautiously put on notice an Indonesian academic named Soedjatmoko. Viewers of this fall's PBS series "Six Great Ideas," in which a vociferous group of diplomats, academic administrators, and other thinkers thrashed about in a sea of speculations, will remember the exchange. Mr. S. had tried to deflect "the search for truth" toward "the search for meaning," and Adler, aware that Mr. S. was hinting at *Eastern* vs. *Western* meaning, laid down with staccato emphasis a stern agenda:

"I'm going to hold you to the question of whether or not when we talk about human rights, there are statements that are true or false about human rights, transculturally." ["Truth"]

That was too much for Jamake Hightower, an engaging American Indian half Adler's age with a *Who's Who* entry, for what that's worth, already two lines longer. (". . . to dispel long-standing stereotypes of Indians," it states as part of his mission.) "You are using truth as a weapon," said Hightower. "Fourteen people are having very little input because your concept of truth limits what we are able to say."

Hightower next cited a racial slur from the 1928 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which Adler (since 1974 chairman of the *Britannica*'s board of editors) was quick to disavow; whereupon Hightower ("That isn't my point") said what his point was: that the concept of truth as Westerners have perpetuated it—"ultimate, fixed, singular"—"has upheld all of the most negative aspects of the Western relationship with other cultures": missionaries, for instance; coerced salvation. "And we're doing it again here today." Adler mentioned the conquest of Mexico as something available for objective discussion. Hightower bridled at the very phrasing: "conquest," indeed: *"invasion."* And when the British historian Lord Alan Bullock thought they could at least agree on its date, 1519, Hightower denied even that. It didn't happen in 1519 at all. "It happened in the year One Reed": a different concept of time, a different concept of space. So what is Truth, unless the weapon of the victor?

Before long Adler was "having a great difficulty in agreeing with all of you, because I really do agree with almost everything that's been said, and yet you will not allow me to do it." It was from his quandary that PBS mercifully cut away to the Mort and Bill Show: Mort A. and Bill M. seated on a log in front of the timeless Rockies, chatting about something low-key: whether there can be true and false knowledge. (No, there can't; when it's not true it's opinion.)

Angel: Truth. It was Pilate who asked, "What is truth?" Could you have enlightened him?

Adler: If only I had been there. "Truth," I would have told him, "is an agreement or correspondence between the mind and reality." I would have had him study page 37 of my book *Six Great Ideas.*

Angel: Should Pilate, I wonder, have attended an Aspen Executive Seminar? And would his attendance have forestalled the crucifixion? He asked "What is truth?" on hearing Jesus say, "Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Try to plug your definition into that puzzlement. "Everyone who is of the agreement between the mind and reality . . ." Jesus seems not to have heeded your definitions. He even said, "*I* am the truth."

Adler: Meaningless.

Angel: Do not bang the desk.

Adler: I always bang the desk. It is my emphasis.

Angel: True. We have on file much PBS footage of you banging the desk. Behind you, as you bang, in shot after shot, an Op-art tapestry afflicts the eye like a polychrome test pattern. It helps you at your most intense look benignly placid. The angel who invented Op-art is no longer with us, but centuries ago I had one of his creations in this office. Higher Authority removed it after it had so upset a client named Rembrandt he commenced to gibber and was compassionately translated to Heaven when I had hardly begun my interrogation.

Adler: That seems precipitate.

Angel: You must imagine him gibbering in Dutch. The fountains of the great deep were astir with the reverberations.

Adler: In Dutch. But Dutch is Western. There are Great Ideas in Dutch.

Angel: Are you at home in Dutch?

Adler: No, but it stands to reason . . .

Angel: Pah, reason. (*He consults the Rolodex.*) I see that you commenced (1943) to codify the 102 Great Ideas in the 443 Great Works by the 74 Great Authors. By 1952 the set was on sale, equipped with your General Index, the *Syntopicon.* It has sold mightily, notwithstanding that Kung Fu-tse (Confucius to you) was among the missing. Not Western; even though it was from his China, via reports of French Jesuits, that Western nations received an idea they have come to cherish more than they cherish Truth: a bureaucracy literate enough (alas) to read its own regulations. But let that pass. You did list Homer as one of your authors. Did you offer your customers Homer?

Adler: In Volume Four . . .

Angel: In Volume Four, *Great Books of the Western World*, I find only pages of execrable translatorese. You offered that as Homer? This goes badly, Dr. Adler. (*There are two telephones on the desk, a red and a blue. His hand is moving toward the red.*)

Adler (*quickly*)**:** Ah, the Problem of Translation. I gave a whole page (Volume Three, page 1291) to that problem. Another lifetime I might well devote to the 102 Great Problems. (*He brightens.*) Might we make a deal?

Angel: No, no plea bargains here.

A second lifetime is out of the question. Though I am aware that Reincarnation, if not a Great Idea, was great enough to sponsor eight *Syntopicon* references to Plato, not to mention one to *Moby-Dick*. Do not look surprised. Your *Syntopicon*, all 2,428 pages, is much thumbed in this office.

Adler: That is very flattering. . . .

Angel: Not at all, not at all. Our junior clerks amuse themselves with its naïvetés. Here, for instance, under Wealth 10a ("The nature of wealth as a good: its place in the order of goods and its relation to happiness") we are referred to *Othello* I.iii, where the villainous Iago keeps saying, "Put money in thy purse." Is the customer to take that for a great mind's pronouncement on a great idea?

Adler (*humbly*)**:** Debatable, I concede. But consider the scale. The *Syntopicon* contains 163,000 references. Our staff of 175 went through all 443 books four times. I assigned six ideas a week. We made 900,000 decisions. We included as well the seventy-seven books of the Bible, and Additional Readings to the extent of 2,603 titles by 1,181 authors. It all cost—

Angel: I know, a million dollars. Numbers do not impress us here. Any of us—my office boy, in fact—can call up the infinite digits of transcendental *pi* in the interval between shelling a peanut and ingesting it.

Adler (*sternly*)**:** Aha, I am no longer sure you are even an angel. Angels do not ingest peanuts. Behold in me the twentieth century's authority on angels. In *The Angels and Us* (1982, $11.95) . . .

Angel: No commercials, please.

Adler: . . . I point out that angelic bodies, on the occasions when angels assume them, "cannot perform any of the vital functions that properly belong to living organisms."

Angel: Please do not bang the desk. And do not suppose that uniting one's essence to the essence of a peanut need be a bodily act. Here, where there is no marrying or giving in marriage, here we ingest—the word is metaphor—the Essential Peanut, miraculously multiplied.

THIS year's *The Angels and Us* lists eighteen other Adler titles since 1927. It's an incomplete list; the *Syntopicon* itself is missing. They are none of them books for specialists. He has been a resolute educator; *Aristotle for Everyone* (1978) is subtitled "Difficult Thought Made Easy," and ways of making thought easy entail not just cutting corners but assuring your reader that "philosophy is everybody's business." This means: if we are going to talk about Justice, as we do, day to day, we need to know how to talk about *Justice*, an unwobbling concept, not an elastic bag. The bullying some seminar participants have resented issues from Adler's insistence that for the duration of their talk the word under the spotlight shall not slither or mutate. "Justice" can never mean "fulfillment of my passions," however altruistic one's passions.

He does cut corners, as in a throwaway line about "Plato's wish to expel poets and painters from the ideal state because their portrayal of the gods so grievously misrepresents them." The amount of learned controversy that sentence cuts short has filled many books, notably Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato*, which argues that what upset Plato about poets was that the poets he knew were prior to books. There were only Great Books after there were books, when much shaping of the Western mind had already happened. Plato, by Havelock's account, represented the new literacy, poets such as Homer, the old illiteracy, which you ingested by letting it possess you—memorizing the words, dancing out their tempo: swaying and chanting, in the grip of the god. The fastidious Plato thought that unphilosophical.

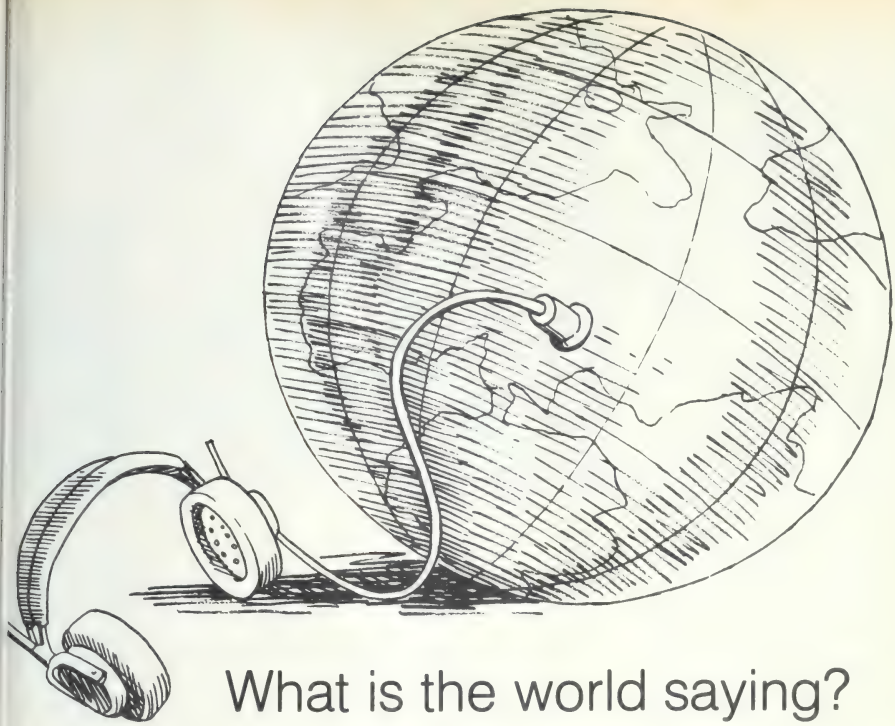
And no god grips you in the filing-card universe of Mortimer Adler's writings, where difficult thought is made easy, if sometimes tedious. There it suffices that Homer shall be tamed to a prose that stirs no pulses, while fine-tooth combs locate *ideas* in Hector's speeches. Here abstractions hold still the way marks do on a blackboard. What made the six PBS broadcasts lively was something absent from the books, the complex tug of particular passions in a room alive with spoken discourse.

Justice: would a *guarantee* that you could get away with it ease your problems about acting unjustly? Plato proposed an example: a ring that could make you invisible, that would let you get away with anything you wanted. So the question went round the seminar: if you saw that ring in Tiffany's window, price unstated but said to be "moderate," would you: a) go in and price it? b) buy it? c) use it?

Physicist, judge, lawyer, entrepreneur, one by one they temporized. Someone even spoke of buying the ring to destroy it. But Ruth Love, Chicago's superintendent of schools, saw no problem at all. She'd, by golly, *use* it. How? "To get rid of all the unjust laws . . . unjust by my definition." Adler: "You'd need to be invisible to do that?" Ms. Love: "No, but it might help sometimes." (*laughter*) ["Justice"]

In great good humor, Adler refrained from pronouncing her radically ineducable. TV showed an Adler readers would barely recognize. Alert, ingratiating, witty—was this the editor of the relentless *Syntopicon*? This the director of the Institute for Philosophical Research, where in thirty years they have only made a start on repackaging "the whole realm of the great ideas"—so far "two volumes on the idea of freedom; one volume each on the ideas of justice, happiness, love, progress, and religion; and a monograph on the idea of beauty"? That such books will help save mankind is a notion so high-minded it verges on self-parody. Ideas, ideas: no tang of the particular. Outside his books, away from the scriptoria where acute ears catch no sound save fifty pens scratching, Adler proved a master diplomat of particularity.

BUT AT the Aspen of voices, persons, particularities, what becomes of ideas? Each participant wanted to describe the view from his window, and when Adler framed topics and held



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them to the framing, you could guess from their faces how at any moment some felt they were politely playing a game. "An intellectual game we are playing," said Mr. Soedjatmoko at one point, and Mr. Highwater spoke of "sticking with the rules." ["Beauty"] If people don't do that, they brawl, as Earl Weaver can testify, and seminar leaders, like umpires, can give high priority to a brawl-free two hours. The unwanted implication is apt to be that definitions have no other utility.

What utility, for that matter, have the prescriptions in Adler's other 1982 offering, *The Paideia Proposal**? One more high-minded committee job, it prescribes for the desperate state of American education, grades one through twelve, in terms as difficult to disagree with as they seem impossible to implement. Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has supplied what must be the funniest blurb of the year: "If to some it seems to go overboard, it goes overboard in the right direction." Chicago's Ruth Love thinks it's a dandy book too. So do Gus Tyler (assistant president of the ILGWU), Benjamin Mays (president emeritus, Atlanta Board of Education), and William Friday (president, University of North Carolina). Such a chorus of packaging experts is instructive.

Save for one gritty specific—all electives should be abolished, since "allowing them will always lead a certain number of students to voluntarily downgrade their education" —not a thing in the *Proposal*'s eighty-four earnest pages will disquiet any school administrator. Most will purr; isn't this what I've always said we were doing?

Adler's love of numbered lists seems tailor-made for glib reports to trustees. "Three different ways in which the mind can be improved" are "1) by the acquisition of organized knowledge; 2) by the development of intellectual skills; and 3) by the enlargement of understanding, insight, and aesthetic appreciation."

* Macmillan, $2.95.

Reading that sympathetically in context, setting it beside classroom reality in, say, East Baltimore, you can just glimpse its revolutionary intent. It is even safe to pretend that it can help change a bad world ("truly a manifesto," coos Ms. Love), safe because its potential for igniting anything is slight, educators having co-opted its jargon long ago. That is a political fact, of a kind seemingly hidden from discussants of Great Idea Number Twenty (Education). In his eightieth year, still fighting a good fight, Mortimer Adler tempts the melancholy judgment that his chief effect, as he translates the lessons of 2,600 Western years into easy American, may be to make them seem finally irrelevant.

Angel: "Six Great Ideas"; six, or 102, no matter. And 900,000 decisions: I like that touch. The American obsession with numbers, the Western obsession with categories, engender in their fatal marriage the remorseless *packager*. "Great Ideas of Western Man: one of a series": that was the caption on a long run of advertisements that I keep in my file of Awesome Vacuities. A series of unmemorable high-minded clichés, each illustrated by a prominent unheard-of artist, it was sponsored for years and years by the Container Corporation of America, to the end (a cynic would say) that Americans might stand reverently holding their hats, all facing one way for the pickpocket's greater convenience. I perceived less difference than I should like between their enterprise and yours.

No, Dr. Adler, no, for all your fervor, what have you not trivialized? And yet for no trivial end. There is much to be said for you. You will not permit thought to be reduced to the firing of neurons. You will not suffer auto repair to be called education. In an age of the categorical denial of meaning, in the age of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, you have insisted that there can be meaning—stable, immutable, as hard as this desk. And the day you talked to him of Goodness, you wrung whole minutes of consecutive sense from Bill Moyers. . . . I am getting old at this work. Back when the morning stars were singing together, I made my thousands of decisions with élan. Now I scarcely ever know which telephone to pick up.

Adler (*quickly*)**:** The blue one.

Angel: Hush, you do not know what you are saying. (*A long pause.*) I have decided. Your eternity shall be unique.

Adler: Not . . . (*he gropes for the worst*) an eternity of culling the Great Thoughts of John Dewey?

Angel: No. An eternity at this very desk. You are a packager. So am I a packager. Heaven, Hell, those are packages. Our appearance, even, is not unlike. I shall change my pace for an aeon. I shall descend and run the Aspen seminars. You shall sit here and catechize the clients.

Adler: With the files? The Rolodex? The video archive?

Angel: With all of it. You will find it comes naturally. I must tell you, though, the secret of the telephones. Red, blue, it does not matter: mere decor. Both go to the one Dispatcher. What matters is not which you pick up but the word you say: you say merely "Los Angeles," or "Kalamazoo."

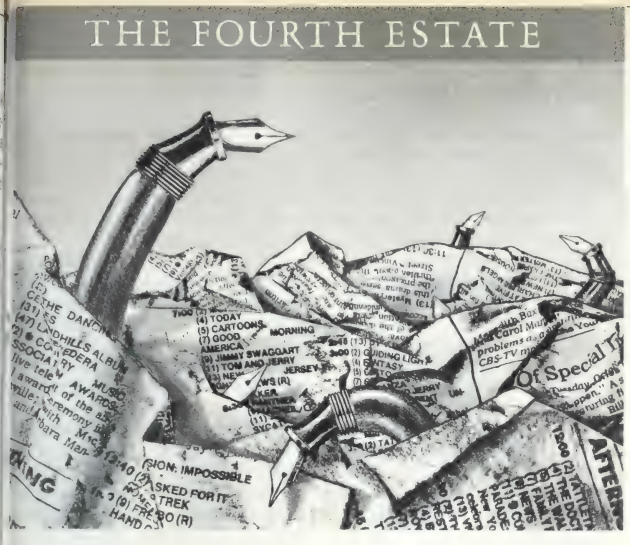
Adler: Los Angeles. Ah, of course: Heaven.

Angel: Your blind trust in categories! For once consider reality. No, for the deserving, seasons and Michigan air. But for the rest of men, in their infinitely greater number, an eternity of smog and issueless freeways.

Adler (*speechless*)**:** . . .

Angel (*donning halo and reaching for wings*)**:** I am off. Do not bang the desk, it is rickety. Be assured, by the way, that time is of no moment here. Reconstructing the next client may take an eternity. I have left the Rolodex open at his card. (*In a blue flash he is gone.*)

Adler (*rubs his eyes, seats himself on catechist's side of desk. Moving his astonished lips, he commences to bone up on the next client*)**:** Derrida, Jacques. b. Algiers, 1930 . . . ■



Tubecrit

by John Powers

Television criticism is still a primitive art.

As TELEVISION has rampaged through the land, print has looked for ways to survive the stampede of images. Safeway racks groan with preverbal magazines full of Loni Anderson bending and Richard Simmons reaching. News weeklies brim with pix and treat Alan Alda with suitable reverence. Daily papers boast programming schedules and previews.Not to mention all those tomes where someone from a coast or university worries that television is fuddling children and midwesterners. Books, articles, reviews, snippets, reams of paper, millions of words: all about TV. Whereas print once soared the cultural heavens, it now rides the back of video like a rhinoceros bird, though from time to time it puffs its chest and blusters like a cartoon Leghorn.

Despite all the words, television criticism remains primitive. Most of it takes familiar shapes: PR handouts minced into column inches, servile glances "behind the scenes" at "60 Minutes," genuflections at the BBC altar, wisecracks we can all do in our sleep (" 'Love Boat' makes 'The Waltons' look like the complete works of Marcel Proust"). Thirty-odd years of television have produced no major critic like Edmund Wilson or James Agee, no wiggy, brilliant thinker like Manny Farber or Roland Barthes. Two recent books by leading TV critics, Edwin Diamond and Tom Shales, embody the tempting but perilous poles of current criticism—one ponderous, attempting to give this new medium the full academic treatment; the other flashy, attempting to deal with TV in its own pop-cult terms.

Whatever strategy they choose, all critics face the immediate problem that most programming is trash, unworthy of comment. This is why the news (a small corner of TV) has enticed so very many of them. With news you seem to be writing about something real: you take the world, measure television against it, and start griping. Though this seems a worthwhile activity, recent writers about the news resemble the prospector who finds a piece of gold, stuffs it in his shirt pocket, and bends down to look for more. The original nugget rolls out, the prospector finds it again, and marries a Parisian dancer in his dreams.

Current criticism enriches itself with the glistering truth that TV news has become show biz, an idea popularized by Ron Powers's 1977 book *The Newscasters*. Newscasts seek high ratings, the argument goes, and this leads them to a life of intellectual crime: they simplify the complex (a thirty-second summary of Nicaraguan history); rip facts from context ("Rail Strike in Britain"); turn issues into personalities ("Is Khomeini Crazy?"); emphasize emotions (a weeping mother) over explanations (the reasons for welfare cuts); and they put all this in a package aimed at wooing the viewer (Dan Rather's sweater, sidesplitting weather men).

These claims are so true that most everyone accepts the analysis if not the judgments drawn from it. In his recent book *Newswatch*,* ABC News executive Av Westin concedes that TV personalizes, fragments, and simplifies the news, but he concludes: "TV news never claimed to represent what an informed citizen needs to know." For him, it is pretty doggone wonderful that the tube can show you same-day footage of tornadoes in Ohio, mighty handy that a "logo" (a clenched red fist) can tell the viewer what the story is about (student protest).

Because everyone agrees about the current structure of the news, most writing on TV news tells us nothing useful. A revealing example is Edwin Diamond's latest book, *Sign Off: The Last Days of Television*.**

John Powers teaches English at Georgetown University.

* Simon & Schuster, $15.95.

** The MIT Press, $17.50.

Doris Ettlinger

Diamond has parlayed his mundane insights about TV into a professorship at MIT, where he runs a "News Study Group." For this book, his group monitored coverage of Three Mile Island, the hostage crisis, political electioneering, and so on. It's appealing that Diamond wants the hard facts about daily newscasts, but it's really boring that these facts do no more than confirm most everyone's intuitions about news coverage. Consider one of Diamond's conclusions:

> *Looking back at the early hostage coverage, the familiar pattern of the blockbuster story emerges. We journalists get onto the big event—Pope in Town! Mount St. Helens Erupts! John Lennon Shot Dead!—and ride the news furiously, until the story and the audience appear exhausted. Then we want change, any change; there's been too much coverage. Enough overkill. But there are certain big events, like the Iranian revolution, that don't go away.*

No doubt. And that's just the problem: Diamond tells us undeniable things about "familiar patterns," but they serve to remind us that "true" and "interesting" are not synonymous.

Like most critics, Diamond salaams before Complexity and Context, yet his career shows how little context a smart fellow needs. True, he focuses on the day-to-day workings of newsfolk, and this makes him superior to many critics, who stop at the edge of the screen like pre-Columbian explorers afeard of falling off the world. But his vision is curiously limited by his stance in an ongoing polemic about TV news. Since his first book, *The Tin Kazoo*, Diamond has had a large investment in the proposition that news coverage is ultimately "neutral." Conservatives and Agnewphiles may think news "too liberal," and the Left may reckon it "capital's lackey," but Diamond insists otherwise. He argues that the news is governed by "institutional constraints" (time, money, etc.) and that, far from cutting reality to fit an ideological frame, newspeople zoot around looking for obvious stories. Indeed, the whole news business strongly resembles "the fake wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*—a bumbling operation bolstered mostly by a voice machine and phony visual effects."

This analysis may sink the cork of those who think that the Rockefellers literally pass their days riffling G-notes and writing Dan Rather's lines, but it ignores more complicated frameworks of value. TV news courts corporate sponsors and is managed by white, college-educated males who (as Diamond says) "pick up on" the "prevailing atmospherics of the dominant social institutions, in part shaping some of the currents and eddies, but mostly being shaped by them." Hardly a cabal, newspeople still have numerous values that underwrite their broadcasts and their sense of "objectivity": they look kindly on welfare capitalism, the family, and reform-minded feminism, are skeptical of socialism and radical change, are condescending to third world politics and peoples, are fascinated by social upheaval and sexual "outlaws." It would be new and exciting to see how this group's structure of thought combined with "institutional constraints" to produce coverage of El Salvador's elections or the Sandinista revolution. Such a precise analysis would probably reveal, contrary to Diamond, that TV news is both "liberal" and "lackey," torn between liberal opinions and fundamentally conservative assumptions.

A favorite Diamond theme is that viewers see through TV manipulations nowadays because they've grown so sophisticated. The same is true of readers: anyone likely to read a book or article about television is looking for something more multifaceted than this particular Diamond.

TOM SHALES's predecessor as TV critic for the *Washington Post* was the Diamond-like Sander Vanocur, remorselessly dull and high-minded. Shales, now widely syndicated, is representative of a generation of TV critics that is coming to dominate the field. He has a sensibility far different from earlier TV writers, who viewed the new medium with eyes utopian or boohooing the death of culture. Shales meets the first prerequisite for his job: he likes TV. And he's a skillful practitioner of the *Texas Chain Saw* Criticism, loud and rough and funny.

His recent collection, though, shows the limitations of his method. *On the Air!** makes you laugh while it bores you. The book includes personality profiles, nudge 'n' wink satires, kudos for "The Tonight Show," recaps of news coverage, nostalgic glances at "The Twilight Zone." It is energetic, amusing—and thoughtless. Instead of analyzing how "Charlie's Angels" could make such a splash, he serves up predictable jokes about Farrah Fawcett-Majors's hair. He mocks the show biz aspect of Dan Rather's "mission" to Afghanistan, but Shales's style (the article is called "Gunga Dan") suggests that he hopes to sober up TV news by pushing a pie in its face. When the Seventies end, he sums up with a roar, undeveloped and inconclusive ideas flying like splinters before his prose:

> *Like all decades* [?], *this one was cyclical. Cop shows came in a wave and left in a hail of bullets. Jiggle girlie shows bounced their way into America's lap. At the beginning of the 1970 prime-time network TV season, there were 15 hours of musical-variety programming in the schedule each week. At the beginning of the 1979 season, there were none.*

And what might this mean, pray tell? Well, meaning is pretty high-falutin stuff.

Shales, sad to say, writes criticism that has the manic vulgarity of TV itself. *On the Air!* begins: "I love the food at McDonald's, I like the smell of Right Guard deodorant and I'm incurably crazy about television." Critic, heal thyself! For while these words hint at an endearing lack of pretension, they also suggest a kitschy-coo snobbery that topples serious ideas even as it plants one-liners: "So it's like New Year's Eve on the S.S. *Poseidon*,

* Summit Books, $15.50.

with the tidal wave scheduled for 11:30." At the risk of being pompous, I want to insist that we live in a much richer world than Shales's pop sensibility can describe, a world where folks eat T-bones and autumn bonfires, meet people who are wittier than Johnny Carson, and enjoy works of art more profound than "Lou Grant."

Though *On the Air!* is mainly sound and fury, don't think Shales an idiot: he's a better critic than most and his tale signifies plenty about the lot of the TV critic. The writer today must try to outshine the shiniest medium. A critic like Shales must compete directly with the tube itself, especially newfangled shows like "Entertainment Tonight," where convincing androids mouth the latest media palaver. Next there'll be a cable channel that will show nothing but people talking about what's on other channels.

Shales and his newspaper kin live in an endless present, forced to write almost daily, trapped into talking about a single evening's shows. This can be depressing, for if TV's future is always rosy and its past always golden, its present is perpetually dingy. Most critics never get to explore trends, analyze a series, or wax philosophical. They're too busy flailing about in the daily dinge of a medium where mayflies outlive ideas.

This is why some say TV criticism can never be any good. Look at particular shows and they seem to vanish before your eyes, much less your mind or memory. They seem deliberately feckless. And this poses problems because criticism ordinarily begins with the confidence that creator and audience at least share aspirations. The concertgoer assumes that the Philharmonic isn't playing Mozart just for the cash; the book reviewer expects Grace Paley or Thomas Pynchon to be after something substantial. TV is different: 1950s talk of television as "the Eighth Art" is little more than a dismal joke in the 1980s. TV executives live to snout for moolah, and their venality is thought so natural that most everyone has stopped mentioning it. Westin's whole book on the news never hints that it's strange when ratings and dollars determine what information we'll receive. With entertainment programming, things are worse: most shows seem so ill considered and transparent as to be critic-proof. It's difficult to write intelligently about "That's Incredible!" Though "Dallas" may be a gas, it scarcely requires a visionary or dragoman to explain it.

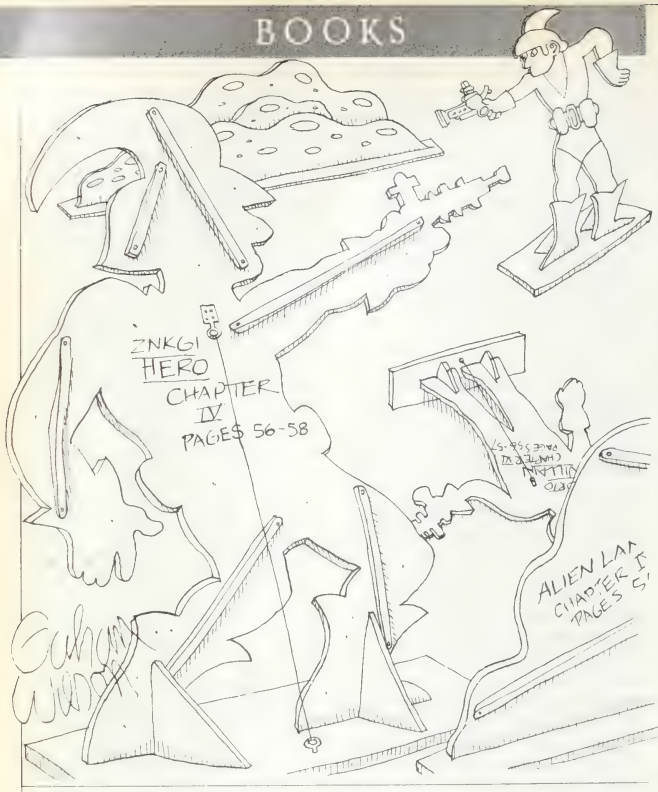
FACING such unpromising material, critics seldom see the differences between programs or track the cultural trajectories they reveal. Not sure of how to proceed, they repeat a few received ideas (news is show biz, TV is intimate, images are emotional) and do some recombinant fiddling with them (show biz news uses emotional images). And they generally ignore the defining details of the programs before them. Yet this is where criticism lives: only by seeing the particular object can you talk meaningfully of trends, the medium, or the culture.

The conventional wisdom is that Michael Arlen, who writes for the *New Yorker*, is the TV writers' MVP, able to hit the interpretive longball, to go deep in the hole for a nuance and gun down pretension at the plate. He has impressed readers by treating television as seriously as painting or fiction, by making sustained arguments over several pages, and by attempting to connect his medium to larger cultural issues. But in the years since *The Living-Room War* (1969), Arlen has lost the sass and passion that made his criticism compelling. A comfortable man of letters, he now lolls in the owner's box. His 1981 collection, *The Camera Age*, exudes hygienic urbanity and suggests that what he cares about most these days is cutting an elegant figure and protecting his well-groomed prose style from the video-swilling rabble. And this is all wrong. Anything sedate or ponderous or priggish betrays the mingy and meretricious charms of TV karma.

IS THERE such a critic, at once saucy and reflective, half Dr. Johnson, half Lenny Bruce? There's a lively and intelligent middle ground filled with topics for those attuned to a show's details, the possibilities of the medium, or the movement of our culture. And since we are a nation of TV experts, albeit informal ones, such a critic could count on a sophisticated audience.

Consider the possibilities. How can we know that "Brideshead Revisited" is better-made television than "Magnum, P.I."? What are the social values implied by "Fantasy Island"? How do current dramas organize visual space, and how has this changed since, say, "Perry Mason"? Why did "Charlie's Angels" succeed when similar shows flopped? The stars? Coming first? Its corrupt feminism? How do acting styles differ between "General Hospital" and "Hill Street Blues"? Is it true, as many claim, that the state of technology is the major influence on TV news?

None of these topics is so difficult or so deep that it would give readers the bends. Nor do any require the sort of writing you sometimes see in the *Journal of Popular Culture*, dry academic paragraphs mined with the latest French neologisms. I'm after nothing that requires advanced degrees. No critic who watched "Fantasy Island" attentively would have any trouble discussing how the show's epiphanies inevitably reinforce the status quo: people come to Fantasy Island in order to accept their reality. To notice this is criticism, and writers about TV could go far toward helping their audience connect its informal expertise to the traditional questions of art and culture. Is a show unified? What is its world view? How does it use its medium? What are its politics? How can we tell if it's good or bad? Why do people like this show and not something else? There's nourishment enough in television for several critics who are sharp of eye, lofty of aspiration, and powerful enough to explore the territory. ■



Destination: Void

by Arnold Klein

Science fiction is to fiction as Christian Science is to science.

GROWNUPS are reluctant to take science fiction seriously, and with good reason: sci-fi is a hormonal activity, not a literary one. Its traditional concerns are all pubescent. Secondary sexual characteristics are everywhere, disguised. Aliens have tentacles. Telepathy allows you to have sex without the nasty inconvenience of touching. Womblike spaceships provide balanced meals. No one ever has to grow old—body parts are replaceable, like Job's daughters, and if you're lucky you can become a robot. As for the adult world, it's simply not there; political systems tend to be naïvely authoritarian (there are more lords in science fiction than on public television) and are often ruled by young boys on quests. The most popular sci-fi book in recent years, Frank Herbert's *Dune*, sold millions of copies by combining all these themes: it ends with its adolescent hero conquering the universe while straddling a giant worm.

Enthusiasts, of course, beg to differ with this view of sci-fi. Uniquely among literary subgenres, sci-fi takes itself very seriously indeed, and is the only one that claims to provide more than a few hours of escapist repose—more, in fact, than the rewards of great art. Sci-fi fans declare that theirs is the one area of literature in which the implications of scientific progress are confronted and, to use their favorite word, "explored"; that all those telepaths, tentacles, and technocrats make for dangerous and daring reading. In an essay characteristically entitled "SF: The Challenge to the Writer," critic Reginald Bretnor claims that sci-fi emerged "to try to cope, in fiction—in the imaginations of its authors and its readers—not just with life as it had 'always' been but with the world as it promises, or threatens, to become tomorrow, next week, next year." Sci-fi novelist Norman Spinrad goes further: "truly great science fiction transcends other great literature," he says, because "science fiction has the potential not merely to describe existing realities, not merely to imagine nonexistent realities, but actually to *create* realities." Actually to create realities? Evidently; for sci-fi patriarch Poul Anderson has created a world in which *Dune*, giant worm and all, goes "deeper than ever Carlyle did into the nature and significance of the hero as savior." This is not to slight Carlyle, of course—no one could go deeper into anything than a giant worm.

Such grandiose claims as these would have been unthinkable thirty years ago, when sci-fi was still struggling in the mire of pulp ephemera. But today, with millions of avid readers and healthy advances, sci-fi writers are naturally inclined to take a loftier view of their enterprise, and their pretensions have been smiled upon in unexpected quarters. Academics have taken to sci-fi with a vengeance—at last count there were over 1,000 universities, colleges, and junior colleges offering courses in science fiction. Almost

Arnold Klein is a poet who used to write book reviews and animal features for the Soho Weekly News.

very sci-fi bookstore now has a
helf of academic criticism, and re-
earch is going forward all the time
n such impressive vehicles as the
'ournal of Popular Culture and the
'ournal of Science Fiction. Some
ulp veterans, however, treat this
ory-tower condescension with hor-
or; said one, "it's time to get sci-
nce fiction out of the academy and
ack into the gutter where it be-
ongs." But such *nostalgie de la boue*
s doomed by sci-fi's newfound ce-
lebrity. Feminists, overjoyed at find-
ing a genre where any kind of social
system, or sexual configuration, can
be created or destroyed, have
poured into the field, as have liter-
ary bigwigs such as Doris Lessing;
and these last have mighty strong
precedents. After all, as the profes-
sors never tire of telling you, Dante,
Lucian, and Cicero were all pio-
neers of literary space travel.

But the typical literate adult, immune to highbrow fads and Ph.D.-mill desperation, will find little enough creative power on the sci-fi shelves, unless his eye is caught by the Amazonian lewdness of the book jackets. Sci-fi titles are dizzying: *Syzygy*, *Norstrilia*, *World of Ptavvs*, *The World of Null-A*, *Babel-17*, and (my favorite) *Destination: Void*. The cover blurbs give a good idea of the staccato inconsequence of most of the genre. They tell of Otto McGavine, "one of the twelve Prime Operators in the universe," who travels from planet to planet "encased in plastiflesh, his mind disguised by personality overlay"; of Artur Blord, business colossus of the Ridge Stars, who outwits the dreaded Skal, "a centuries-old telepathic lizard," as well as the mutant race of Zilths; and of Lewis Powell, the telepathic cop whose investigations are hampered by the fact that telepathic evidence is inadmissible in court (an improvement on the M'Naghten rule at last). The authors of the works so bizarrely described, Joe Haldeman, A. E. Van Vogt, and Alfred Bester, are no mere fly-by-nighters, either —they are leading figures in three different generations of science fiction.

This airbrushed chaos is giddy indeed. In fact, definitions of science fiction are notoriously hard to frame—there is always the danger of including something too good. (I speak of American sci-fi here; the European and English versions, with their deeper traditions, based on Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, are infinitely better.) Professors Joe De Bolt and John R. Pfeiffer, in a critical guide to modern sci-fi, have managed to reduce the inconsequence of the bookshelves to eight basic categories: stories of utopias and dystopias, human destiny, alternative and lost worlds, alien life, travels by spaceship and time machine to inaccessible places (sic), new technology, new beliefs, and new mental and physical capacities. Of course, you don't need Occam's razor (a favorite sci-fi preindustrial artifact, misunderstood to mean "simplify everything") to see that these genera have been multiplied without necessity; uncharitable souls might even consider all eight categories as forming one irrelevant mess. In the language of the schools the professors call them "content indexes"; they may equally be called "gimmicks." Beneath them lies sci-fi's ineradicable adolescent orientation. For all the high-flown talk of creating realities, this genre of glum fourteen-year-olds is out to take revenge on three rather intractable aspects of everyday life: the complexity of adult society, the limits of the mind, and the frailness of the body.

Worlds are destroyed in science fiction with rather disturbing nonchalance. Joe Haldeman, for example, has no compunction about the planet October, wiped out in passing, in his recent *All My Sins Remembered*, for a small breach of interplanetary peace; C. J. Cherryh's indigo-skinned Hunter of Worlds, pursuing an obscure point of alien etiquette, is set to incinerate the planet Priamos out of pique; and in the immensely popular *Ringworld* Larry Niven starts an explosion in the galactic core in a way wholly collateral to the novel's main action, which deals with the discovery of a giant doughnut-shaped world, and casually writes *finis* to the whole galaxy. Worlds that are allowed to face The Future in one piece are usually governed by benevolent authoritarian regimes, or some similarly simpleminded arrangement. Thus in his many tales Cordwainer Smith, member in good standing of the Science Fiction Hall of Fame (one of the many self-honoring mechanisms of sci-fi, others being the Hugo, Nebula, and Campbell awards), runs the universe with the Instrumentality, a gang of subtle lords and ladies who partly recall the Vatican and partly the State Department, where Smith was once employed. In a much honored trilogy, soon to be a quartet and God knows what else, Isaac Asimov's Foundation, set up to preserve civilization in a dark age, intervenes successfully in human destiny, which is more than can be said for Henry Ford's. And Larry Niven, not content with the glory of having invented his giant doughnut, consigns the universe to the Protectors, who, oddly enough, have beaks. Less utopian setups are run more modestly, by emperors and god-emperors, and the out-and-out dystopias in sci-fi are usually set on a weary Earth governed by moms and dads who are either too strict or too lax.

This moronic impatience with the complexities of real life is also at the bottom of sci-fi's indecent obsession with technology. Needle-shaped space cruisers run neck and neck with nekked ladies both inside the cov-

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ers and out. The painstaking depictions of the ramscoop hyperdrives that enable some young idiot to visit the terra-formed moons of Jupiter are really glorifications of supercapitalism, without, of course, the hurble-burble of ground rent and class struggle: there is no *Attack of the Space Landlords* or *Co-op 2250 A.D.!* on the sci-fi shelves. ("When the alien Zetas first undertook to provide heat and hot water to a rapidly cooling Earth, humanity was delighted . . . until the boilers broke, and the Zetas wouldn't fix them!" "It's buy or die in 2250 A.D., when one man owns all the living units on Earth . . .")

As for the human body . . . well, the imago Dei will fall on hard times, to judge from sci-fi tales of human destiny. After all, it is woefully adapted to space and must be coddled by supertechnology even to survive. As sci-fi writers move on to inaccessible planets of fire and ice, the body becomes subordinated to its equipment and finally, in a fit of technological ecstasy, identified with it. In Frank Herbert's *Dune*, for example, the desert dwellers of Arrakis seem to exist for the sake of their foul-weather gear (What! Has he read *Sartor Resartus*?). The mind, alas, proves equally obsolete —new mental powers have to be invented to keep it from atrophying altogether. Telepathy and psionics (whatever that is) bridge galaxies, cure neuroses, enslave women, even catch crooks. In Grand Master (another intramural honorific) Robert Heinlein's hormonal masterpiece, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, the hero, a boy raised by Martians, acquires the nifty mental trick of making things disappear when he wants them to, be they totalitarian baddies or ladies' sportswear. Lewis Powell, the telepathic cop of Alfred Bester's *The Demolished Man*, is a first-class esper (get it?); he sees that criminals are "demolished," that is, humanely have their personalities erased by a process another author felicitously calls "mindwipe." The mind, considered a machine, a cross between a radio transceiver and a forklift, can thus be reprogrammed as easily as a Hewlett-Packard. This swallowing up of humanity by mechanism is a stage of capitalist mythology that even Marx couldn't foresee: it climaxes in the sci-fi convention of implanting a human mind in a robot body, an enormity that the much honored sci-fi writer Frederik Pohl has the gall to name "man plus."

For all its gains, though, the mind, I am sad to say, has lost something in sci-fi, namely, its intelligence. Sci-fi writers are the most pretentious idea-mongers going, but their ideas are *stupid*. "Abstract design is all right—for wallpaper and linoleum. But *art* is the process of evoking pity and terror," says the smartest man in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and Doris Lessing, who has obviously caught the pomposity bug, confidently tells us that there is "inherent in every creature of this Galaxy a need, an imperative, towards a continual striving, or self-transcendence, or purpose." Imagine such moonshine in a regular novel! And the voluminous and celebrated Arthur C. Clarke, in an epigram quoted repeatedly by other sci-fi writers, announces that "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." A lot of truth there, no doubt, but to find it you'll have to negate the sentence.

THERE IS one part of the human body sci-fi writers do like: genes. They are more enthusiastic about genetic engineering than the boys who floated Genentech on the New York Stock Exchange, although with less reason. They finagle these infinitely plastic beasties in all sorts of wonderful ways, making people into animals and so on; although some writers, displaying sci-fi's infinite capacity for attacking things that will never come to pass, find *some* such manipulation disturbing.

Genetic engineering is the special province of women sci-fi writers, who have thus failed, rather spectacularly, to liberate the genre from its adolescent concerns. An interest in cloning pervades their work, since cloning gives you babies without the bother of sex and pregnancy. I *The Golden Space* Pamela Sargen who has become a leading figur in women's sci-fi through her man novels and anthologies, carries con tempt for the body about as far a it can go: not only does the nove feature a superrace developed i vitro, but it even endows norma folks with immortality, which elim inates the miseries of having a bod at all. Still, women sci-fi writers a a group have it all over their mal counterparts. Their ideas are les hackneyed and their prose muc better: James Tiptree, Jr. (per name of Alice B. Sheldon), Kat Wilhelm, and Vonda McIntyre ar actually acceptable literary techni cians. But, like the men, the womer often fudge the fiction side of sci ence fiction. In her famous *The Lef Hand of Darkness*, Ursula K. Le Guin did away completely with gen der roles, allowing her aliens to be come male or female at mating time. This was creating reality in deed, but LeGuin was soundly crit icized by Polish sci-fi writer Stan islaw Lem for not adequately presenting the fate of the individual amid such radical uncertainty—a highfalutin criticism that can be leveled at the whole genre, but which seems to come from another world of discourse.

THE LITERARY demands of an audience that delights in the plastiflesh of a Prime Operator or the machinations of Skals or even Zilths are not likely to be high. But science-fiction writers must run up against the constraints of plain old fiction eventually. And here the failure is complete: sci-fi plots are ridiculously simple as well as simply ridiculous, the characterization nonexistent, the prose not prose at all, but rather something distantly resembling it, about the way printer's Greek resembles Pindar. In his essay on the "challenge" of sci-fi, Reginald Bretnor actually urges up-and-coming writers not only to "exercise their imaginations, their intelligence, their skill" but also to master the rules of grammar. A challenge indeed!

This genrewide incompetence is really only partly the audience's fault. Sci-fi writers are incredibly prolific—some have written literally hundreds of books—and take a sort of macho pride in selling their work. All those frazzled years of underpaid pulps have thus left a bad mark on them: they think it's better to write twenty-five books for twenty-five paychecks than to rewrite one book twenty-five times and not get paid at all. But there is a deeper reason why the current legions of paperbacks will never add up to a *Human Comedy* or even an *Inhuman Comedy*. For all its thinky self-promotion, sci-fi is an inherently uninventive genre. Ptavvs, Syzygies, and Norstrilias notwithstanding, sci-fi is an unimaginative literature—in fact an anti-imaginative one.

Go back to the professors' content indexes—they reveal the history of science fiction as a series of knockoffs: Cloned Lit. (Good name for a college course, that.) The history of real literature can't be reduced to categories, because it is made up of unique works, works made unique by the creative powers of individual minds. By contrast, sci-fi only *seems* creative; in fact it merely "plays with fixities and definites," associating, combining, and recombining the paltry elements of experience that already lie at hand. Literature recreates the common world and brings you into closer contact with it, and when great writers divine the future—Balzac's anticipation of social types, for example, or Max Beerbohm's prophecy of phonetic spelling, already haff-realized by the *Chicago Tribune*—they do so through a thorough analysis of the present and an understanding of what's permanent in human affairs. Sci-fi, on the other hand, is merest daydreaming, and mechanically escapist daydreaming at that. A typically fraudulent method of "creating realities" in sci-fi is magnification: the spaceship is a big car, the supercomputer is a giant abacus, telepathy is extensive intuition, bilious dystopias are aggravated parking tickets. Or reverse the direction of something, make time go backward, turn progress into regress, aging into rejuvenation—or make hot into cold, scarcity into plenty, weakness into strength . . . But you get the idea: science fiction is always unoriginal, essentially so—an idle toying that is the very opposite of the sustained attention required in real art. The traditional problem of defining science fiction thus boils away into nothing: it cannot be defined aesthetically because it does not exist aesthetically.

Still, sci-fi novels are more inane in practice than they have to be. Plots are stereotyped: the hyperprolific wordsmiths naturally repeat classic tales, quests, odysseys, *Tempests, Vies de Jésus*, and so on. That is, when they bother to produce plots at all. In Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama*, which won sci-fi's three highest awards, a giant thing floats into the universe, is investigated, unfolds various technological marvels, and departs. *That's it.*

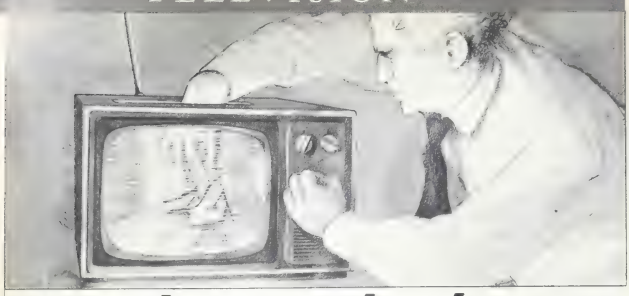
Sci-fi characters are necessarily one-dimensional; since they live in unreal worlds, they cannot be built up through observation or tested against experience. Aliens are considerably, and hilariously, worse, with their psychologies deduced from one outstanding feature. In Cordwainer Smith's *Norstrilia*, for example, the Underpeople are animals genetically recast into human form and given speech, but still embody silly clichés—turtle people are slow, cat people lithe, bear people avuncular. Larry Niven's Puppeteers are mighty strange-looking creatures, with their two heads, long necks, and three legs, but they have exactly one character trait: they are cowards. Really, the whole parade of aliens and futuristic humans in sci-fi reminds one of Ben Jonson's humours, and to hear these cardboard oddities talking contemporary adolescent American is too choice. Of course, when they speak alien, things are even worse: "You *m'metanei* are fragile people. I know you have *giyre* to your asuthe." I can't say I know how aliens should talk, but surely they should make sense; and as Dr. Goldsmith once said, the trick lies in making little fishes talk like little fishes, not like whales.

All this adds up to one thing: the unrelenting triviality of science fiction. Far from being dangerous and daring, as its enthusiasts constantly exclaim, it is essentially *boring*, since no one cares, or can care, about the joys and sorrows of beings on Pterapsis IV or Terebratula VII, even if they do have *giyre* to their asuthe.

Why read science fiction? Well, if you are suffering from an impacted molar or a broken heart, sci-fi will help you to oblivion, since reading it is as close to being dead as you can get. But even so, sci-fi has its throbs of vexation. There is, for example, the disgusting worship of science, pervading even those books that attack it. The first artists who wrote fiction about science hated it—they thought it presumptuous, unnatural, cruel, and sick. Contemporary sci-fi has abandoned this tradition of Hawthorne and Shelley and gone whole hog for modernist ambivalence or pulp paraphernalia. In her preface to her third sci-fi novel, the sputtering *Sirian Experiments*, Doris Lessing even wishes she were a physicist. Myself, I wish she were an artist, a job I consider at least as admirable as designing nuclear bombs or torturing laboratory animals.

Finally, but most inescapably, there is the fact that death doesn't exist in science fiction. This is a singular omission, but what with life auras, memory engrams, and cybernetic bodies, it is an inevitable one. When a fan was asked on television about the death of one of the heroes in the movie *Star Trek II*, he laughed, "Oh, no one ever really dies in sci-fi." He was right. But if literary art has anything to do with death, and a number of its foremost practitioners have demonstrated that it does, then science fiction can only be the opposite of literary art.

Destination: Void, indeed. ■



Mailer's Teleplay

by Michael Sragow

The Executioner's Song has been poorly adapted, but the author has no one to blame but himself.

TELEPLAY by Norman Mailer": seeing those four words in the credits for NBC-TV's four-hour broadcast of "The Executioner's Song" gave me pause. "Teleplay." Is there any clunkier label in the world of entertainment? Maybe it made sense when TV dramas were self-contained and live, but today, when most of them are like grade-B movies—and when "miniseries" like "The Executioner's Song" resemble the swollen cinematic spectaculars of the early '60s—the label seems like a euphemism for "slipshod screenplay."

But somehow the label fits what Mailer has done with his own literary masterpiece. For even though the film was made with top Hollywood talent like editors Richard A. Harris and Tom Rolf and was photographed by one of the few great cinematographers, Freddie Francis (of *The Elephant Man* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*); even though most of it was shrewdly cast with little-known but talented performers like Christine Lahti and Steven Keats, as well as actual participants in Gary Gilmore's life like his attorneys, Dennis Boaz and Robert Moody, and his prison priest, Father Meersman; even though it is more faithful to Mailer's study of crime and punishment, courage and salvation, than it probably would have been had anyone else but Mailer written it, "The Executioner's Song" is little more than clichéd TV.

Mailer and producer-director Lawrence Schiller have taken a book that is, more than anything else, about the confounding complexity of every individual human being and have flattened it into a conventional "docudrama."

At one point in the show, a cleaned-up, slimmed-down version of Schiller, the journalistic entrepreneur who made both the book and the show possible, reveals the simplicity of his thought as well as his hustling salesmanship. He says that if only he gets *Gary's* rights, he can do a story about a state-raised con who struggles with his old prison habits and then reverts to theft and killing; if only he gets Gary's girlfriend *Nicole's* rights, he can do the story of a child-mother with two kids who falls uncontrollably in love with a killer. Well, Schiller got both, and with Mailer's help, all he's done on TV is those two stories—nothing more, nothing less.

Mailer's participation in turning Gilmore's saga into such electronic pulp is puzzling until you consider that word "teleplay." For if Mailer has had true and useful things to say about most every medium from photography to graffiti, television has earned his unmitigated ire, and in his adaptation of *The Executioner's Song* his disrespect is showing.

WHENEVER Mailer has ventured into the other dramatic forms, whether theater (*The Deer Park*) or movies (*Beyond the Law*, *Wild 90*, and *Maidstone*), he's also written critical essays to explain those excursions. These essays, more consistently interesting than the dramatic works themselves, boast an honest, robust passion for media other than print. Particularly in his articles on movies—"Some Dirt in the Talk" and "A Course in Filmmaking" (reprinted in *Existential Errands*) and "Tango, Last Tango" (in *Pieces and Pontifications*)—he's been both perceptive and prescient. Back in the late '60s he was already talking about the kinds of movies that would be made by men like Robert Altman and Bernardo Bertolucci in the '70s: movies in which traditional three-act dramaturgy would be replaced by a dynamic visual texture, in which meaning would emerge from an ambience created by actors improvising under an intuitive director and shaped with the intense collaboration of cameramen and editors.

Indeed, in her encomium for *Last Tango in Paris*, Pauline Kael wrote that Bertolucci had achieved what Mailer had been trying to get at in his own movies: "Realism with the terror of actual experience still alive on the screen." Mailer responded in his piece on *Tango* by charging that however bold Bertolucci was, he hadn't improvised *enough*. Mailer has always insisted that acting without a script is the only way to achieve a cinematic reality that, to use his terminology, is convincingly "existential." (He often uses "existential" as an adjective describing any situation in

Michael Sragow writes movie reviews for Rolling Stone.

which the outcome is unknown, though he gave the word a rest in his *Tango* piece.) That insistence on total improvisation is downright quixotic, as Mailer's nerve-racking films demonstrate. But it provides him with philosophic fuel to protest everything wrong with mainstream Hollywood moviemaking, from its insularity and innocuousness to its utter predictability.

What's most startling about "The Executioner's Song" when judged by Mailer's own standards is its total lack of surprise. Mailer has stated that one goal he had when writing the book was to make his readers forget that they already knew the outcome of Gilmore's release from prison—of the thefts and killings he committed and of his demand to be executed rather than face life imprisonment. But Schiller and Mailer charge up the opening of the TV show by displaying the credits over the aftermath of Gilmore's second robbery-murder and then flashing back to his release from prison three months earlier. I didn't read the book before seeing the show, but I could see every punch coming, telegraphed by music that resorted to melodramatic ominousness whenever bad news hit the horizon.

MAILER'S adaptation is a combination of miniaturization and leveling. Although he's criticized TV for having a built-in "baleful disregard for the finer possibilities of human attention," his teleplay has a plot line that nobody can miss. The TV Gilmore is simply a man on a short fuse, impatient for sex, love, and a sense of belonging. As if to contradict Mailer's argument for increasing the "existential" input of actors, Tommy Lee Jones is virtually *anti*existential as Gilmore. Throughout Jones's performance, what we see is not the pain of being Gilmore—a self-educated and self-immolating man, brutalized by prison and by his own private demons, yet capable of eloquence in words and drawings—but the pain of acting Gilmore, of having to portray an often detestable character. And the need to play against Jones thwarts the efforts of many of the other actors who are good. Rosanna Arquette is everything the flaky but passionate Nicole should be: full of shuddering, inchoate thoughts and feelings. But because Jones transforms the man who was a demonic genius-lover to her into an animalistic thug, you have to wonder what on earth she sees in Gilmore. The streak of childish petulance that Mailer and Schiller noted in the book here becomes the whole human being. They don't even show us Gary's drawings.

Whenever Schiller and Mailer approach something fascinating, like Gary's belief in reincarnation and God and the Devil, they back off too soon, and the camera whisks us away along with Gary's Mustang. Mailer also employs mirror images, foreshadowing, and other devices in the teleplay that he wouldn't tolerate in his books. Gary's cousin Brenda, whose feelings for him are sexual as well as familial, jumps up on him and hugs him with her legs spread, as Nicole does later on. Shortly after Gary's release, we see a motel clerk snicker at him; later, we recognize him as Gilmore's second victim.

The book opened a new window on the modern American West. There were still wide open spaces around Provo, Utah, where Gary lived after prison, but the old spirit of possibility had up and gone. Men and women scraped out a living, either clinging to old religious values or treading water with catch-as-catch-can sex and drugs. Yet the TV show isn't broad enough for this vision. It achieves eloquence only in Freddie Francis's vast, empty landscapes, as beautiful and melancholy as a pristine snow about to be sullied by footprints.

ALL THE evidence points to the conclusion that Mailer could not imagine doing anything truly distinguished for television and thus chose to act as a hack who would be at least superficially faithful to the material. Television is, after all, the one medium before which Mailer has admitted nearly total defeat. His long *Esquire* essay "Of a Small and Modest Malignancy" (reprinted in *Pieces and Pontifications*), an engrossing, embittered personal account of a deeply intelligent man's vain attempt to express his intelligence via video, amounted in the end to restated McLuhanisms. Most of what Mailer has learned, apparently, in his bouts with Mike Wallace and Gore Vidal, is that it's better to appear unimpressed and casual on the tube than all revved up, and that pearls of wisdom attract more attention than chains of thought.

Still, because it has some of the book in it, "The Executioner's Song" possesses more innate interest than most other TV shows. But limit its category to "Best four-hour TV series based on a real-life crime scandal and shown by NBC in 1982"—even then, it doesn't come close to the best. That was "Murder in Texas," about the glamorous Houston cosmetic surgeon John Hill, who was accused of murdering his first wife and of trying to murder his second wife before apparently falling victim himself to an unknown killer. (There's a hint at the end that Hill is still at large.) "Murder in Texas" had no literary pedigree—it wasn't even based on the most famous book about the case, Thomas Thompson's *Blood and Money*, but rather on an account by Hill's second wife (*Prescription: Murder*, by Ann Kurth). And it didn't pretend to be more than a ghoulishly fascinating murder mystery. But by doing their jobs well, its makers were able to evoke a vivid, avaricious milieu—the ambience was like that of TV's "Dallas" poeticized and thus made potent—and to elucidate a character who, though upper class, in many ways resembled Gilmore: a tortured romantic and musician with religious notions and vast amounts of stubborn will. "Murder in Texas," not "The Executioner's Song," showed that it's possible to do good work for television. All you have to do is respect the medium. ■

FICTION

by Frances Taliaferro

The Names, by Don DeLillo. Alfred A. Knopf, 339 pages. $13.95.

AMONG novelists of antic disposition, Don DeLillo is the most metaphysically inclined. Ever since *End Zone* (1972), a very funny novel that poses cosmic questions about football and nuclear catastrophe, DeLillo has been rippling the still waters of ontology with splashes of crazy humor. He is a humanist literate in science—see *Ratner's Star* (1976), a black comedy of the computer universe—and, when he chooses, a master of cerebral silliness.

In *The Names*, the antic DeLillo defers to a more somber fellow whose occasional humorous outbursts are subdued to a larger design. *The Names*, like much of Western civilization, begins in Greece. The time is the near-present; the narrator, James Axton, is an expatriate American editor and writer, now a "risk analyst" with a firm that writes political risk insurance for corporations with foreign holdings. Axton, separated from his wife, makes frequent visits to her and their son on the Greek island where his wife is working on an archaeological dig. Along with her colleague Owen, whose passion is epigraphy —the study of inscriptions—Axton is fascinated by the news of a ritual murder on the island. When the circumstances of that killing suggest a connection with other murders, Axton and Owen gradually infer the existence of a cult whose pattern is to kill the victim in a place whose initials match his own. Axton and Owen pursue this pattern all over the Mediterranean world and even to the Indian desert, obsessed by their need to know this secret cult, whose name, never revealed by its members, is most likely Ta Onómata: "The Names."

All the while, Axton's "real" life is a rather amusing expatriate one based in Athens. The members of his little circle find themselves grouping and regrouping in cafés and restaurants; their desultory conversations, which reflect their desultory loves and friendships, provide many occasions for epigrammatic humor. (On the Middle East: "They seem to go together, carpet-weaving and political instability." On Asian history: "I keep reading about tribes or hordes or peoples who came sweeping out of Central Asia. What is it about Central Asia that makes us want to say that people came sweeping out of it?") DeLillo is entertaining on various worldly subjects, among them tourism:

> *Tourism is the march of stupidity. You're expected to be stupid. The entire mechanism of the host country is geared to travelers acting stupidly. You walk around dazed, squinting into fold-out maps. . . . You are an army of fools, wearing bright polyesters, riding camels, taking pictures of each other, haggard, dysenteric, thirsty. There is nothing to think about but the next shapeless event.*

The ordinary reader will probably feel most comfortable with those sections of *The Names* that come closest to what we recognize as novelistic reality: the sketches of expatriate life or scenes of marital disintegration. When Axton and his wife first separated, he compiled "the 27 Depravities," a mental list of her grievances against him (e.g., "1. Self-satisfied. 2. Uncommitted . . . 11. You don't allow yourself the full pleasure of things . . . 21. You go to extremes to keep your small mean feelings hidden . . . 22. You contain your love . . ."). Evidently Axton has never been wholeheartedly involved with anyone; even as a first-person narrator, he evokes little sympathetic interest. Now, expatriated from his country, his marriage, and his family, he finds himself increasingly unable to "connect" with anything but the cult and its curious pattern. In response to his disconnection, the humor of the novel dwindles and the balance gradually shifts; the tone grows more impersonal and more bleak. What might have been a detective story with CIA undertones settles into an austere, cerebral avant-garde film. (In fact, DeLillo provides a filmmaker who hopes to record the life of the cult: it "seems so close to something on film . . . an idea involving languages, patterns, extreme forms, extreme ways of seeing.")

THE NAMES is an intricately patterned examination of patterns, a well-wrought series of words about words, in which the existence of an immanent meaning is assumed but not quite articulated. Hardly a page is without some visual image of names and namelessness, alphabets and illiteracy, inscriptions, patterns, and designs. Very early in the book, Axton's wife recalls observing two men, who could not see each other, simultaneously walk to their motorcycles, kick-start them at the same instant, and roar off in opposite directions up into the hills. "You could see the event shaping itself," and you could infer some atavistic, preverbal meaning. Later images reinforce this perception of pattern. Mountains look like "semantic rudiments." A Kurdish boy inches across the great inscriptions on the face of the Behistun rock, perhaps using the Babylonian letters themselves as finger grips. To Axton, who does not know the language, written Arabic looks like "design, not meant to be read, as though part of some unbearable revelation."

The Names raises questions both poetic and philosophical, as DeLillo considers language and meaning and finds their relation "metaphysically

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disturbing." So is this novel, but the disturbance remains theoretical and empty. The reader can accept Owen's passion for epigraphy—"letter shapes that struck his soul with the force of a tribal mystery"—but it is hard to swallow this sort of passage, which is not uncommon in *The Names*:

> *The murder has by this time become part of the dream pool of* [the murderer's] *self-analysis. The victim and the act are the-*
> *ory now. They form the philosophical base* [the murderer] *relies on for his sense of self. They are what he uses to live.*

The Names will make many readers (this one included) feel dull and inadequate. I suspect that one could read it most productively with a thorough knowledge of semiotics, and that it will gladden the hearts of many structuralists. To the common reader it may only seem dauntingly factitious. ■

BRIEF REVIEWS



Steve Wilcox

Three Novels, by V. S. Naipaul. Knopf, 508 pages. $17.50.

IT'S hard not to have mixed feelings about V. S. Naipaul's first three novels, reissued now in a tidy omnibus edition. The publisher's blurb promises "a sun-drenched world of laughter and calypso, of magical events and unrestrained passions." Nothing could be further from the truth.

On the one hand, these stories exemplify Naipaul's dry wit—he caricatures a gallery of Trinidadian eccentrics in an anglocentric fashion reminiscent of Evelyn Waugh's *Black Mischief*. On the other hand, there's a brahmanic disdain that permeates all his colonial portraits. Behind the droll dialects and foibles of his characters, the author's fastidious repugnance is just perceptible enough to be distasteful.

The Mystic Masseur (1957), Naipaul's first book, is the chronicle of Ganesh Ramsumair, a failed schoolteacher in Port of Spain who decides to become a sort of unlicensed Hindu doctor—a "masseur." Eventually he becomes rich and famous throughout the Caribbean, an author, and a candidate for public office ("GANESH is Able, Nice, Energetic, Sincere, HOLY"). We get a final glimpse of him in London, where he's been predictably translated to G. R. Muir, Esq., M.B.E. *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) is a whimsical depiction of the coming of democracy to Trinidad. The citizens of one small town happily sell out to the highest bidder in their first free election, which turns out to be an orgy of petty greeds and superstitions. *Miguel Street* (1959), the least satisfying of the trilogy, is a collection of brief cameos of local eccentrics seen through the eyes of a young boy.

V. S. Naipaul has contributed to our understanding of the colonial phenomenon more than any other living writer, demonstrating the ways in which colonial cultures are attracted to precisely those institutions they must destroy to become independent, institutions they parody through imitation. Naipaul has exhibited an extraordinary ability to focus microscopic attention on the intricacies of bureaucracy (*An Area of Darkness*), as well as political and religious turmoil (*Guerrillas*; *Among the Believers*); and he can embody complex social upheavals in the daily lives of ordinary people (*A Bend in the River*).

But Naipaul's brilliance is always broadly directed toward systems rather than toward individ-

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tials. His faux-naif delineation of the lives of the people on Miguel Street is not nearly so vivid or subtle as his analysis of Michael X, the Trinidadian Black Nationalist revolutionary (*The Return of Eva Peron*). Whatever the merits and amusements of these first three novels, they pale in the light of the innovative and important works that were to follow. **J. S.**

Fragile Paradise, by Glynn Christian. Atlantic–Little, Brown, 250 pages. $19.95.

ERROL FLYNN, Clark Cable, and Marlon Brando have turned Fletcher Christian, leader of the *Bounty* mutiny, into three different kinds of film hero. And as Christian's great-great-great-great-grandson Glynn demonstrates in this first thorough biography of his ancestor, the many other accounts of the mutiny conflict and gape with holes. Glynn Christian grew up in New Zealand haunted by questions about his ancestor, and when he finally decided to ferret around in piles of family papers and make an expedition to Pitcairn, he hoped to establish not only what kind of person Fletcher was but also what really happened between him and Bligh, and how he died. The book succeeds quite well, but more as a family history than as an orthodox biography. It has the amateurishness of a family record—a tendency to meander and settle minor scores—but it more than makes up for that in its quirky passion and in its sense of a real tugging connection being made over the centuries.

In 1787, the *Bounty* left England with forty-five men aboard to collect breadfruit. Bligh returned more than two years later, humiliated and vengeful, and with only twelve men. Fletcher Christian had, of course, disappeared in the South Seas; he seems to have died on Pitcairn Island under violent circumstances at a date unknown. No grave exists; not even a picture of him survives, but we know that he did not look like a movie star. He was swarthy, with bowlegs and a tendency to sweat profusely when nervous, particularly in his palms, whereas Capitain Bligh, Christian's patron and tormentor, had a delicate, petulant face and a deeply contemptuous nature. Expert in matters of shipboard hygiene and food, he was disastrous as a leader, by turns vitriolic, hysterical, and cowardly. The ninety-one-foot-long ship, crammed and reeking, took ten months to reach Tahiti, where the demoralized crew plunged giddily away and into the hedonism of Polynesian life. Bligh never got his men back, and Glynn Christian convincingly proves that when Fletcher poked a cutlass blade at Bligh's throat and yelled, "Bligh, you are my prisoner," Bligh had it coming.

Only nine mutineers reached Pitcairn, accompanied by a handful of Tahitians. The atmosphere in their little settlement quickly turned rancid: sexual jealousy, drunkenness, and racial tension led to a bloodbath in which Christian, who had lived in calm monogamy with his Tahitian wife, Isabella, and their children, was one of the first to die. Glynn Christian is almost convinced that he has found the rough location of his ancestor's grave. Wondering how much the location matters, this intense and romantic biographer, who persisted in cooking lasagna for his crew even during storms at sea, concludes wistfully that maybe Pitcairn, "the great lonely rock," is "the most extraordinary mausoleum one young man ever had." **H. R.**

Frost in May (221 pages, $4.95), **The Lost Traveller** (314 pages, $5.95), **The Sugar House** (255 pages, $5.95), **Beyond the Glass** (285 pages, $5.95), by Antonia White. Dial Press.

ANTONIA WHITE's first novel, *Frost in May*, is a girls' school story that was recognized as a classic soon after it was published in 1933. It became the first in a quartet of novels about an introspective young British woman, the last of which was published in 1954. All of them are well worth reappraisal.

The central figure in *Frost in May* is a nine-year-old girl, Nanda Grey, who struggles to keep her lively nature within the confines of a stringent convent, and the novel ends unhappily with her expulsion. Nanda's character reemerged in 1950 with a new name, Clara Batchelor, in White's *The Lost Traveller*, in which Clara becomes a governess and suffers her first major tragedy when her beloved pupil dies suddenly in an accident while he is under her care. In *The Sugar House* (1952), Clara grapples with a catastrophic marriage that is mercifully annulled. Clara's story concludes with *Beyond the Glass* (1954), a haunting novel of her retreat into madness in the midst of an overwhelming love affair.

All the works are largely autobiographical. White was born in London in 1899 and entered a convent at the age of nine, after her family converted to Catholicism. Her adult life was characterized by instability and insecurity (she trained as an actress but worked at a variety of unrelated jobs afterward; her marriage ended in divorce in 1938). She suffered from intermittent attacks of insanity after "The Beast," as she called it, first afflicted her in 1922. She was deeply affected by her father, a rigid schoolmaster with high ideals, and by the Catholic Church, and these influences manifest themselves as recurring themes in her novels. The picture that emerges is that of a young woman devoted to the Church and to her father, but often tormented by guilt when she fails to meet their standards.

The introduction to *The Lost Traveller* mentions that White changed Nanda's name because she wanted this "to be a real novel—[not] so much my own life." Her concern is not really justified, because these books, however autobiographical, succeed as novels. For all of Clara's—or White's—somber concerns, the books are infused with plenty of well-placed levity and spicy humor. White transformed her experience into a fluent prose quartet that displays a range of intensity, depth, wit, and acute understanding of human nature—qualities that always age gracefully. **J. B.**

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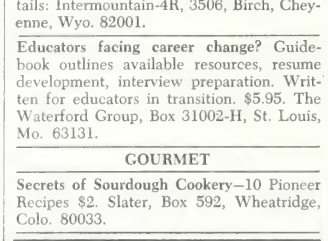
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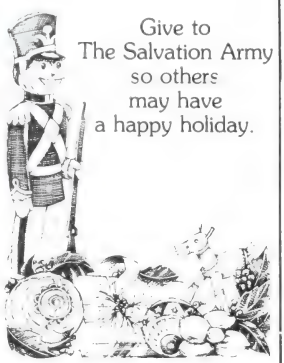
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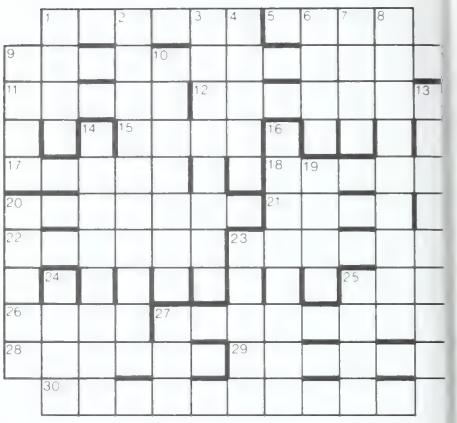
Solution to the November Puzzle Notes for "Abecedarian Jigsaw"

B	R	O	Z	B	E	S	M	I	R	C	H	
A	T	R	O	U	T	H	E	R	G	O	O	
S	E	N	O	R	H	A	D	A	P	T	S	
S	P	A	N	N	E	D	I	Q	I	Y	T	
E	I	M	M	O	N	O	C	Y	C	L	E	
T	R	E	K	U	C	H	A	N	C	E	L	
M	A	N	A	T	E	E	T	H	A	D	J	
A	T	T	E	S	T	E	R	S	L	O	U	
S	I	E	C	A	C	H	O	K	I	N	G	
S	C	R	O	L	L	A	P	I	L	A	U	
I	A	D	A	M	U	W	H	E	L	P	L	
F	L	E	X	I	B	L	Y	V	I	S	A	

1. jugula, anagram; 2. visa, anagram; 3. club, two meanings; 4. (Co.)medic; 5. shad, anagram; 6. span-ned, reversal; 7. the (Fe)nce; 8. manatee, homonym; 9. mono (c..y)cle; 10. Mass-if; 11. ch-OK-in-G; 12. bes(M)irch, anagram; 13. piccalilli, homonym; 14. salmi, anagram; 15. had-J(erusalem); 16. trek, hidden in reverse; 17. p(l-R)atical, anagram; 18. chance-L; 19. host-el; 20. Sc.-roll; 21. a-dam; 22. Coty-led on; 23. zo-on, reversal; 24. ergo, reversal; 25. W-help; 26. l-Raq(uel); 27. ornam(anagram)-enter; 28. s(t)en(t)or; 29. at-testers; 30. ad-apts.; 31. BA's-set; 32. burnout, anagram; 33. trout, anagram; 34. pil(reversal)-Au; 35. Kiev, hidden; 36. hee-haw, a-he reversed in hew; 37. coax, homonym; 38. a-trophy; 39. flexibl (anagram)-(Ma)y; 40. bro.-Z.

By the Numbers

by E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.



This month's instructions:

Eleven diagram entries are not clued in the usual fashion. Among the conventionally clued answers is one foreign word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The answer to last month's puzzle appears on page 75.

CLUES

ACROSS

1. Beats most of the thieves (6)
5. Record is set in Washington (4)
11. Rambling or partially specialized language (5)
20. Shed tears, turn white and dry out (5, 2)
21. Create change (4)
22. Thrash crone with end of blunt instrument (6)
25. 8-ounce copper penny (3)
26. The use of memory is said to be committed to paper (4)
27. To do a doctor's job could be grandiose, if right is assumed (8)
28. Russet deteriorates with heat (6)
29. Fights with pickets (6)

DOWN

1. Follow what's recited when recited (4)
2. One who orders tenant to take in soldier and me (10)
4. Almost sluggish, quiet travel through mud (5)
6. Church supports one-time lust (4)
8. Sonny, you and I pursue vehicle that's sooty (9)
9. Radar image blurs ship around the edges (4)
13. Sweeps around New York when upset, and faints (8)
14. Terribly brittle love words in a musical (8)
16. Mass gets old wrappings (8)
19. Stir up red paint for the artist (4)
23. Fauns dancing in confused state (5)
24. Chewed cobs and fruit . . . (4)
25. . . . fruit that's doubly firm? (4)
27. Endlessly avoid a French nobleman (3)

CONTEST RULES

Send complete diagram with name and address to By the Numbers, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by December 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the January issue. Winners' names will be printed in th February issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "Hex," ar Shirley Bershatsky, Brooklyn, New York; Arthur E. Danes Fredonia, New York; and Mrs. M. H. Fritch, Pittsburgl Pennsylvania.

Technology and Art

On the back of the one dollar bill is a Latin inscription: *annuit coeptis*. It means: be favorable to bold enterprise. Benjamin Franklin chose this motto because he believed initiative and innovation were singular characteristics of the people he helped forge into a new nation.

This is still true today. But like an acorn that will not grow into an oak without water, innovation must be irrigated or it will wither. Initiative needs to be nurtured or it will not take root.

That is partly why United Technologies spends more on research and development than all but six other U.S. corporations, most of them substantially larger than ours.

It also partly explains why we contribute to the arts. As with research and development, United Technologies is a leader in supporting the arts. In fact, as a percentage of total corporate giving, our corporation contributes about three times the national average to the arts.

Why is a high-technology corporation involved in the arts? Actually, the world of technology and the world of art are not that much different. Both rely on the imagination of the individual. Both strive for innovation and excellence. Both provoke our thoughts, uplift our spirits, and improve and enrich our lives.

The fruits of technology, like the best of art, sometimes puzzle us, oftentimes stir us, but always rivet our attention. Art and technology both present the uncommon marvel of daring and deliberation working together, each carried to its highest level.

Art and technology both reflect bold enterprise. Neither is a slave to tradition. Neither believes in change for its own sake. Neither is limited by what others believe possible. Both seek to explore the bounds of imagination.

Nearly 400 years ago, in the last half of the 16th century, Queen Elizabeth of England came upon Sir Walter Mildmay, one of her court favorites, whom she had not seen for some time. "Sir Walter," she inquired, "where have you been?" Mildmay, who had been away establishing Emanuel College at Cambridge, answered, "Madam, I have been away planting an acorn. And when it becomes an oak, God only knows *what* it will amount to."

Art, like research and development, begins as an acorn. Nurtured and irrigated, the acorn can grow to the fullest. And what the harvest brings from this effort will amount to a bold enterprise indeed.



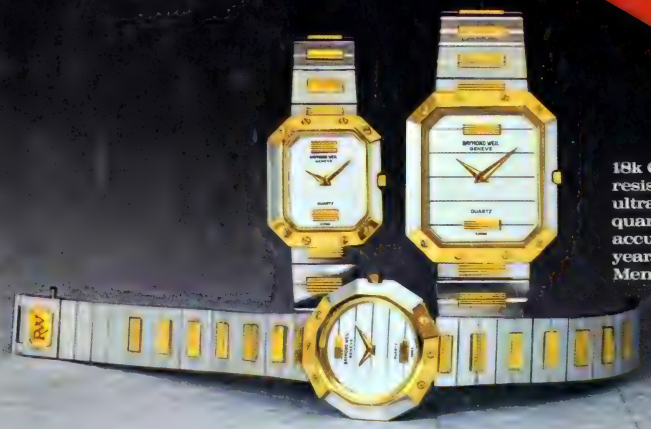
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